Male and Female

A Medieval-Renaissance Anthology

translated by

Ross G. Arthur

Alektryaina Press
Cambridge, Ontario
2025

Contents

The Life of St. Thais, Whore 3
The Life of Saint Agnes 5
Marcabru, *Pastorela* 13
Arnaut de Carcassès, *The Tale of the Parrot* 17
Ramon Vidal de Besalú, *The Jealous Man Chastised* 21
"The Sin of Being Seen," from *The Rule for Anchoresses* 27
Tyolet 31
Desiré 39
Doon 47
"Nicholas and the Bourgeoise," *from Miracles of the Virgin* 51
Renaut, *Ignaurés* 53
The Wicked Lady, or *The Old Woman Castrated* 61
"Daphne and Apollo" from the *Ovide Moralisé* 69
Ramon Muntaner, "The Conception of Jaume el Conqueridor," from *The Chronicle* 77
"The Deception of Women" from *Dives and Pauper* 81
Fleurie 89
William Dunbar, *The Two Married Women and the Widow* 93
Marguerite of Navarre, "Florida and Amador," from *The Heptameron* 103
Miguel de Cervantes, *The Force of Blood*, from *Exemplary Novels* 125
Giambattista Basile, "Cinziella," from *The Pentameron* 139

Introduction

It is no longer possible—if indeed it ever was—to claim that an anthology contains the best, or the best-known, or the most representative texts of a particular sort. Similarly, it is no longer productive for creators of anthologies to attempt to impose their interpretations on the texts they present. Suffice it to say that it is hard to imagine a modern reader of the pieces in this book who would fail to understand them in the context of their attitudes toward gender. One way or another, each of them reveals sets of attitudes about the ways in which males and females are defined through their relationships to each other. For the most part, they are narratives; they range over eleven centuries and almost as many languages; there are some which are pastoral and genteel, and others which are irredeemably vile; some are relatively well known to medievalists, but others are all but unstudied. Each of them, I think, repays close attention, and I have found that classroom discussion of the whole ensemble is a useful part of university courses either on Medieval and Renaissance Europe or on the history of ideas about gender, and serves as a supplement to, if not replacement for, the study of "high culture" texts written by and for members of the élite of the time.

The Life of St. Thais, Whore

Latin, 6th Century

There was a whore named Thaïs who was so beautiful that many men sold all their property because of her and were reduced to total poverty; quarrels broke out among her lovers, and the girl's threshold was often stained with the blood of young men. When Abbot Paphnutius heard about this, he put on worldly clothing, took a gold coin and went to see her, in a certain city in Egypt; he gave her the coin, as the payment for sin. She took the fee, and said, "Let us go into the house." He went in, and she invited him to enter the bed, which was spread with costly coverings; he said to her, "If there is an inner chamber, let us go into it." She replied, "There is one, but if you are afraid of people, no one ever comes into this outer room, and if you are afraid of God, there is no place which is hidden from the eyes of His Divinity."

When the old man heard that, he said to her, "Do you know that there is a God?" She answered him, "I know about God, and the kingdom of the future age, and the future torments of sinners." He said to her, "If you are aware if these things, why have you ruined so many souls? When you render account you will be damned not only for your own crimes but theirs as well."

When Thaïs heard this, she fell at the feet of Paphnutius the monk and prayed to him tearfully: "Impose a penance on me, father; I am confident that if you pray for me, forgiveness will come. I ask only three hours' delay, and then I will go wherever you command and I will do whatever you instruct me." And when Abbot Paphnutius had arranged a place for her, she went away and collected all that she had earned by her sin. She gathered it together in the middle of the city and set fire to it, and, with the whole population watching, called out "All of you who have sinned with me, come and see how I will burn everything that you gave to me!" It was worth forty pounds of gold.

When it had all been consumed, she went to the place the abbot had assigned to her. He had found a monastery of virgins, and led her into a small cell. He closed the door of the cell and sealed it with lead, leaving a small window through which a little food could be passed to her, and gave orders that every day a little bread and water should be provided for her by the sisters of the monastery.

As he departed from the leaded door, Thaïs said to him: "Father, where do you command me to pass water?" He replied, "In the cell, as you deserve!" When she asked him how he wanted her to pray to God, he replied, "You are not fit to name God, nor to refer to His divinity with your lips, nor to raise your hands to Heaven; for your lips are full of iniquity and your hands are polluted with filth. Seated, facing east, repeat these words over and over: 'You who made me, pity me.'"

When she had been enclosed for three years, Abbot Paphnutius took compassion on her, and went at once to Abbot Anthony in order to ask him whether the Lord had forgiven her sins or not. When he arrived and had told him the whole situation carefully, Abbot Anthony called his disciples together and told them all to keep watch that night in continuous, individual prayer, until God gave an answer to one of them concerning the matter which had brought Abbot Paphnutius there. And when they had withdrawn and were praying insistently, Abbot Paul, Saint Anthony's greatest disciple, suddenly saw in the sky a bed adorned with precious coverings and served by three virgins with bright shining faces.

When Paul said, "Such profusion cannot be meant for anyone except my father Anthony," a voice came to him: "It is not for your father Anthony, but for the whore Thaïs." When Abbot Paul related all this openly, the will of God was known and Abbot Paphnutius departed. He returned to the monastery where she was enclosed and broke open the door which he had sealed up. She asked that she might remain enclosed there. When he had opened the door, he said to her, "Come out, for God has forgiven your sins."

She replied, "I call God as my witness, that ever since I came in here, I have placed all my sins in a bundle before my eyes. My sins have not left my sight, but I have been constantly weeping as I look on them."

Abbot Paphnutius replied, "God has forgiven you not because of your penance, but because you have always had the thought of them in your soul." And when he led her out, Thaïs lived only fifteen days, and then rested in peace.

The Life of Saint Agnes

AMBROSE

Latin, 6th Century

Let us celebrate the feast day of a most sacred virgin. Let psalms resound on one side and lessons be heard on the other; let the multitudes of people rejoice on one side, and let Christ's poor be relieved on the other. Let us all rejoice in our Lord, and, to the edification of virgins, let us call to mind how blessed Agnes suffered. In the thirteenth year of her life, she destroyed death and found life, because she loved only the author of life. In number of years, it was counted infancy, but the age of her mind was great; although young in body, she was old in mind; beautiful in face, but more beautiful in faith.

When she was returning home from school, the son of the Prefect of the city fell in love with her. He sought and found her parents, and began to offer great gifts and to make many promises. Then he brought precious ornaments, which were rejected by blessed Agnes as if they were dirt, with the result that the young man was goaded more by love. Thinking that she wanted to receive better ornaments, he lay before her all the glory of precious stones. He also began to assail the ears of the virgin, by himself and through friends, relatives and acquaintances, promising wealth and houses, possessions and families, and all kinds of worldly commodities, if she would not refuse him as her husband.

Agnes is said to have returned this answer: "Get away from me, you fuel of sin, you nourishment of iniquity, you food of death. Get away from me, since I have already been approached by another lover, who has given me better jewels than you have. He has betrothed me to him with the ring of his faith, and he far surpasses you in birth and nobility. He has adorned my right arm with a precious bracelet and my neck with invaluable precious stones. He has put pearls beyond price on my ears, and has surrounded me with glorious glittering gems. He has placed his seal on my face, so that I may not accept any lover except him. He has dressed me in a gown of golden cloth, and has adorned me with chains of immeasurable value. He has shown me incomparable treasures which he promised to me if I remain true to him. I cannot, therefore, to the discredit of my first lover, behold any new lover or leave the one to whom I am bound in charity. His generosity is more excellent, his power is mightier, his countenance is lovelier, his love is more sweet, and he is better endowed with every grace. He has already prepared a marriage bed for me, and his organs resound for me with pleasant music, and his virgins sing for me with the most righteous voices. I have already tasted honey and milk from his mouth. I have already been held in his chaste

embraces; my body has already been coupled to his, and his blood has beautified my cheeks. His mother is a virgin, his father never knew a woman. He has angels to wait on him; the sun and moon marvel at his beauty. His smell raises up the dead, his touch strengthens the weak, his riches never decay, and his wealth never decreases. To him alone I give my faith, to him I commit myself with all devotion. In loving him I remain chaste, and touching him I remain pure, and accepting him I remain a virgin. Nor will children be lacking after this marriage, where offspring is produced without pain, and daily fertility abounds."

The mad young man heard this and was gripped by blind love; through anguish of mind and body, he lost his breath. He lay stretched out on his bed, and through his deep sighs his love was revealed to the physicians. His father learned of what the doctors had discovered, and the same things which had been said by the son were repeated by the father's voice in petition for the virgin. Blessed Agnes refused, saying that she would not break the faith she had given to her first lover for anything. The young man's father replied that since he was the prefect no-one should be preferred to himself. He began to ask insistently who was the husband about whose power Agnes was boasting. Then one of his informers stepped forward and told him that she had been a Christian from the time she was a child, and that she was so obsessed with magic arts that she said that Christ was her husband.

The prefect, hearing this, became very glad; sending men after her with a great commotion, he commanded her to attend appear before the tribunal. First he addressed her privately with fine promises, then he threatened her with fearful punishments. But the virgin of Christ was neither seduced by flatteries nor shaken by terror; keeping a calm expression and a firm purpose, she rejected both his flattering and his threatening. Semphronius the prefect, seeing such constancy in the girl, addressed her parents. Since they were of noble birth and he could not bring force against them, he charged them with being Christians also.

The next day, he ordered Agnes to be brought before him, and repeated to her again and again his words about the young man's love. When all these words proved useless, he commanded her to be brought to his tribunal, and said to her: "Unless you must cast off the superstition of the Christians, about whose magical arts you are boasting, you will not be able to escape your madness and be capable of sound counsel and advice. Since you wish to persevere in virginity, you must go to the venerable goddess Vesta and attend her sacred sacrifices day and night."

Holy Agnes replied: "If I have refused your son, who is a living man, although one seized by unjust love—a man endowed with reason, able to hear and see, feel and walk, and capable of enjoying the light of day and its benefits—if for the love of Christ I cannot bear to look at him, how could I worship dumb and deaf idols, senseless, soulless things, and, to the injury of the supreme God, bow my neck to vain stones?"

Semphronius the prefect heard this and answered, "I wish to take your youth into account, and so I will delay punishing you for blaspheming the gods, seeing that you have not yet reached the age of understanding. But do not so despise yourself as to incur the wrath of the gods."

Holy Agnes replied saying, "Do not despise my physical youth so much as to think that I want to win your favour. Faith goes not by years but by sense. God Omnipotent approves the minds of men more than their years. But as for your gods, whose anger you do not want me to incur, let them be angry at me! Let them speak! Let them give me these commands, let them give orders to be worshipped, let them demand to be adored! I see that you intend something which you will not bring to pass, so do as you choose."

Then Semphronius the prefect said, "Choose one of these two things: either sacrifice with the virgins to the goddess Vesta, or else you will be thrust into a brothel and be forced to be a whore. Your Christians who have enchanted you will be far from helping you, even if you are confident that you can endure this calamity with undaunted spirit. Therefore, do honour to Vesta as I have said, and so honour your race, or else to the ignominy of your parents you will be a public whore."

To this holy Agnes replied with great fortitude: "If you knew who my God is, you would not let such words pass from your mouth. Since I know the power of my Lord Jesus Christ, I confidently despise your threats, trusting that I will neither sacrifice to your idols, nor be defiled by other filth. I have the angel of my Lord as the keeper of my body. The only begotten Son of God, whom you do not know, is an impregnable wall for me, a guardian who never sleeps, a protector who never fails. As for your Gods, they are either made of brass, more appropriate for making pots for people to use, or of stone, more suitable for spreading out as paving stones to avoid the mud. Divinity does not dwell in vain stones, but in the heavens, not in brass or in any other metal, but in the supreme kingdom. Unless you and your kind stop worshipping them, a similar punishment will be imposed on you: just as they were burned by fire when they were cast, so those who adore them will be burned by eternal fire, not to be founded there, but to be confounded forever, and perish!"

Then the insane judge commanded her to be stripped and led naked to the common brothel, with a herald proclaiming, "This is the sacrilegious virgin Agnes, who blasphemes the gods, being delivered up to the brothel."

As soon as she was stripped and her hair was untied, divine grace gave her hair such unusual thickness that she seemed better covered by her locks than if she had been clothed. When she went into the place of turpitude, she found the angel of God so ready to aid her that he surrounded her with a marvellous light so that no one could touch or look at her because of its brightness. The whole room glittered like the sun in its greatest power, and the more curious a man was with his eyes, the more the keenness of his sight was blunted. When she prostrated herself in prayer to the Lord, there appeared before

her eyes a very clear white garment. She took it and put it on, and said, "I thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for counting me in the number of your handmaids and commanding this clothing to be given me." This gown was so perfectly fitted to the measure of her body and so conspicuous for brightness that no one could doubt that it had been made by angels' hands.

The brothel became a place of prayer, and everyone who entered it worshipped and did reverence, giving honour to that great light, and so came out cleaner than they went in. While this was happening the prefect's son, who had been the cause of this crime, came there with his youthful companions, in order to insult the poor maid, for he believed he would be able to take his lascivious pleasure with her. He saw his companions enter with rage and filthy cruelty and come out in great reverence and admiration; he thought that they were impotent, vain, soft and wretched fellows. Mocking them, he rushed boldly into the place where the virgin was praying. Seeing the great light around her, he still did not do honour to God, but presumptuously rushed right into the light; but before he could even touch her with his hand, he fell flat on his face, and was choked by the devil and died. His companions, seeing him stay so long, thought that he was busy in his filthy works, and so one of the young men who was most friendly with him went in to rejoice in his insulting of her; finding him dead, cried out with a loud voice and said, "Most pious Romans, help! This whore has killed the governor's son by witchcraft!"

At once all the people flocked together into the theatre, and the furious company made differing exclamations. Some said that she was a witch; others that she was innocent; still others that denounced her sacrilege. The prefect himself, hearing his son had died, ran with great sorrow and agitation to the theatre. Entering the place where his son's lifeless body lay, with a loud cry he said to the blessed virgin: "O cruellest of women, did you want to give a display of your magic art against my son?" Repeating these words and many others, he asked her earnestly the cause of his death.

Blessed Agnes said to him: "The one whose will he wanted to perform has received power over him. Why else are all the rest who approached me still safe? Because they all gave honour to God, who sent his angel to clothe me with this garment of mercy and preserve my body, which from my cradle has been consecrated and offered to Christ. They saw the angel's brightness and worshipped it, and they all departed untouched. But this impudent fellow, as soon as he had entered, began to rage and be cruel. When he thrust out his hand to touch me, the angel of my Lord delivered him up to this reprobate death, as you see."

Then the Prefect said to her, "It will be clear that you have not done this by magical art if you beseech that angel to give me back my son alive again."

Holy Agnes replied, "Although your faith does not deserve to obtain this from our Lord, yet because now is time for my Lord Jesus' power to be manifested, let everyone leave now, so that I may offer my usual prayer to him."

When they had all gone out, she prostrated herself on her face, and began to beseech the Lord tearfully to raise the young man to life. And as she prayed, the angel of God appeared and lifted her up as she wept, and comforting her mind, restored the young man to life. He went out and began with a loud cry to proclaim and say: "There is one God in heaven, earth, and sea, who is the God of the Christians. For all the temples are useless; the gods who are served are useless and unable to provide help to themselves or to others."

At these words, all the soothsayers and chief priests of the temples were troubled, so that they roused greater dissension among the people than before. They all cried out with one voice, "Away with this witch, kill this sorceress, who changes men's minds and befuddles their minds."

Seeing these marvellous works, the prefect was amazed, but he was afraid of proscription if he acted against the priests of the temples and defended Agnes against their opinions, so he left a substitute as judge for the people. He himself departed, very sad because he was unable to rescue her after the resurrection of his son. The substitute, named Aspasius, ordered a great fire to be made in the sight of all the people and commanded Agnes to be cast into the midst of the flames. When this was done, at once the flames divided into two parts and burnt the seditious people on both sides, but the blaze did not touch blessed Agnes at all. The people, not acknowledging divine power but imputing it to witchcraft, murmured among themselves and called out great imprecations to heaven. Then blessed Agnes raised her hands in the midst of the fire and poured out these words to the Lord: "O omnipotent God, to be adored, worshipped and feared, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, I bless You because I have escaped the threats of wicked men through Your Only Begotten Son, and I have passed over the filthiness of the devil without pollution. Now I have been sprinkled with heavenly dew through the Holy Spirit; the fire around me dies, the flame is divided, and the rage of this conflagration is poured back on those who kindled it. I bless You, O Father, worthy of all praise, Who permit me to pass fearlessly to You through the flames. Behold, now I see what I believed, now I possess what I hoped for, now I embrace what I have desired for so long. I confess You with my lips and heart, and with all my entrails I long for You. Now I come to You, my one true God, who live and reign with Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, and with the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

When she had finished her prayer, the fire was so completely quenched that not even a hint of heat remained. Then Aspasius, the substitute prefect of the city of Rome was unable to bear the people's sedition and ordered her throat to be pierced with a sword. And in this death she was rinsed in her own rosy blood, and Christ consecrated her to Himself as spouse and martyr.

Her parents, feeling no grief at this, took away her body in great joy, and buried it in a farm of theirs not far from the city, on the road which is called Numentana. When all the crowd of Christians flocked there, they were ambushed by the pagans. Seeing the

armed band of infidels approaching, they all fled. Some escaped, although injured by stones. Emerentiana, a holy virgin, who had the same nurse as Agnes, although only a catechumen, stayed bravely and steadfastly, and reproached them with these words: "O you useless, wretched, corruptible and cruel men, you have slain those who worship the Omnipotent God, and have also assaulted other innocent people with stones!" While she spoke such words to the furious crowds, she was stoned by them; praying at St. Agnes' sepulchre, she yielded up her spirit. There is no doubt she was baptized in her blood, for she suffered death so steadfastly in the confession of our Lord and for the defence of righteousness. At the same hour there was a vehement earthquake, and although the heavens were most clear, there was such thundering and lightning that the greater part of the mad multitude died. And so it happened that no one who came to the sepulchre of the saints was ever molested again.

St. Agnes' parents came with the priests in the night and took away the body of the holy virgin Emerentiana, and buried it in the confines of the field where the blesses virgin Agnes lay.

While St. Agnes' parents continued many nights, watching at the sepulchre of their holy daughter, in the silence of midnight, they saw an army of virgins, all attired in gowns of golden cloth, who passed by them with marvellous light. Among them they saw blessed Agnes, resplendent in the same clothing, and at her right hand a lamb whiter than snow. When her parents and those with them saw those things, they were astonished, but holy Agnes asked the holy virgins to stop their procession for a moment. Standing still, she said to her parents: "See that you do not lament me as dead, but rejoice with me and be glad, for I have received this brilliant home with all these virgins, and I am united in heaven with Him whom I loved with all my heart while I was on earth." After she said this, she went away again.

This vision was revealed in public every day by all those who had seen it. It happened that after some years, this event was reported to Constantia, daughter of Constantine, by those who had seen it. This queen Constantia was a most prudent virgin, yet so covered with sores that from her head to her feet no part of her was healthy. Following advice and in hopes of recovering her health, she came to the sepulchre of the martyr in the night. Although still a pagan, yet with a believing intention she poured out her faithful prayers there. While she was doing this, she suddenly was overtaken by a sweet sleep, and in a vision she saw blessed Agnes offering her admonitions: "Act constantly, Constantia, and believe that Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God is your Saviour, through Whom you will soon be cured of all the sores afflicting your body." At this word Constantia awoke so healthy that no sign of a sore remained on any part of her body.

Returning then to the palace completely healthy, she brought great joy both to her father the emperor and her imperial brothers. All the city was crowned with joy, and there was exultation among the soldiers, the civilians and all others who heard of it. The faithlessness of the gentiles was confounded, and our Lord's faith rejoiced. Then she

asked her imperial father and brothers that a church of St. Agnes be built, and commissioned a sepulchre for herself near by. The news spread that all those who came to her sepulchre in belief were cured of whatever diseases they suffered. No one doubts that Christ still brings this about, to this day. Constance the daughter of the Emperor Constantine persevered in virginity, and through her many other virgins, commoners and nobles, even most illustrious, took the holy veil. Since faith does not suffer the ravages of death, even to this day many Roman virgins attend blessed Agnes, as if she were living in body; inspired by her example they manfully (*viriliter*) persevere intact, believing without doubt that if they persevere to the end they will obtain the palm of perpetual victory.

When I, Ambrose, servant of Christ, found these things written in secret books, I could not allow them to be covered by fruitless silence. Therefore, to the honour of so great a martyr, I have described her deeds as I learned them, and for your edification, O virgins of Christ, I have thought it appropriate to dedicate and direct the text of her suffering, beseeching the charity of the holy Ghost, so that our labour may find fruit in the sight of our Lord, by your imitation of her. Amen."

Pastorela

MARCABRU

Occitan, ca. 1150

The other day, beside a hedge,
I met a half-breed shepherdess,
full of joy and common sense.
And, like a daughter of a peasant woman,
she wore cap and cloak and fur,
a shirt of sack cloth,
and shoes, and woollen stockings.
I came to her across the plain:
"Girl," I said, "my pretty one, it upsets
me that the cold is piercing you."
"Lord," the peasant girl replied,
"thanks to God and my nurse,
I don't care if the wind ruffles my hair,
because I am happy and healthy."
"Girl," I said, "you innocent thing,
I came out of my way
to keep you company.
A peasant girl like you should not
be out, without a comrade near by,
pasturing so many cattle,
all alone in such a place."
"Master," she said, "whatever I may be,
I can tell sense from folly.
As for your comradeship,
my lord," said the peasant girl,
"let it stay where it belongs;
any girl who thinks she has it for herself
has nothing but the appearance of it."
"O girl of noble quality,
your father was a knight
who begot you on your mother
because she was a courtly peasant.
The more I look at you, the prettier you

are to me, and I am lit up by your joy
—if only you would be a little bit human!
"Master, all my lineage and descent
I can trace all the way back
to the sickle and the plough,
my lord," said the peasant girl to me;
"and one who claims to be a knight
ought to be doing the same: working
six days every week."
"Girl," I said, "a gentle fairy
endowed you at birth
with a pure beauty,
far above any other peasant girl.
Yet your beauty would be twice as great
with just one dance, with
me on top and you underneath."
"Lord, you have praised me so much,
and you have driven up my worth,
so that now your love pleases me so well
my lord," said the peasant girl,
"that you will have as your reward
a 'Gape, you fool, gape!' as we part,
and an idle wait this afternoon."
"Girl, a shy and wild heart
can be tamed with use.
I know for sure from passing by
that with a peasant girl like you
a man can have precious company,
and with heart-felt affection—
provided one doesn't cheat the other."
"Master, a man driven by folly will
swear and pledge and promise payment:
that's how you would do homage to me,
lord," said the peasant girl;
"but I am not willing, for a paltry
entrance fee, to cash in my virginity
for the name of a whore."
"Girl, let every creature
revert to its nature:
let us become a couple of equals,

you and I, my peasant girl,
in that cover there, by the pasture,
you will feel safer there
to do the sweet you-know-what."
"Master, that may well be; but
the fool rightly seeks out his folly,
a courtier, his courtly adventure,
and the peasant, his peasant girl.
'Good sense suffers from disease
when men do not observe degrees':
that's what the ancients say."
"Girl, I have never seen a girl
more roguish with a face like yours
or with a more faithless heart!"
"Master, the owl shows us that
one man stands gaping at a painting,
another waits for manna from heaven."

The Tale of the Parrot

ARNAUT DE CARCASSÈS

Occitan, ca. 1210

In a garden enclosed by a wall and shaded by a leafy laurel, I heard a parrot discoursing on the subject I will relate to you. He had come before a lady and brought her greetings from afar. "My lady," he said to her, "God save you! I am a messenger, and may it not displease you if I tell you why I have come here to you in this garden. The best knight who ever lived, the most distinguished and full of joy, Antiphanor, the son of the king who gave a tournament in your honour, sends you a hundred thousand greetings, and prays you, through me, to love him. For without you he cannot be cured of the lovesickness which makes him languish; no doctor can help him at all—but you have it in your power. You can cure him, if you are willing; if you will only send to him, by me, a jewel which he may wear for your love, then you will release him from his sorrow. By my faith, I will tell you more about why you ought to grant him your mercy: for, if it please you, he would rather die for you than live happily for another."

With that, the lady replied to him and said, "Friend, where have you come from, and what do you seek? You seem too eloquent to me! When you dare to say that I should give a jewel to any Christian man at all, you exert yourself in vain. But since I find you so amiable, you may, in this garden, speak to me and say what you wish, for you will not be attacked or captured. But I am very sorry, for love of you, since you are so noble and good, that you dared to give me such advice."

"And I, my lady, am astonished that you do not love him with a good heart."

"Parrot, I would have you know that I love the most capable man in the world."

"And who is that, lady?"

"My husband."

"It is never right for the husband to be all powerful: you may certainly love him, openly, but then, in secret, you should love the man who loves you and is dying for your love, without deception."

"Parrot, you are far too good a speaker. It seems to me that if you were a knight you would know very well how to entreat the ladies. But still, that won't prevent me from asking you the reason why I should commit such treason against the man to whom I've pledged my faith."

"Lady, I will surely tell you: Love has no respect for oaths, and the will follows desire."

"You speak very well, God help me, but, for all that, I have defeated you already; I love my husband more than anything there is in all the world, in good faith, and I don't

want any other lover. How could you dare advise such impropriety, saying that I should love where my heart is not?"

"Lady, I am not saying anything improper. It seems to me that you are getting angry. Still, if you wish to listen to me, you cannot reasonably defend yourself from loving Antiphanor. I grant you, it is right and proper that you should, in public, love your husband more than all others; but then you should have mercy on the man who is dying for your love. Do you not remember Blancaflor, who loved Floris, without deception, or Iseult, who loved Tristan, or Thisbe, when she went to the gates to speak with Pyramus, and no one could dissuade her? You may find a model in any of these. What good would it do you if Antiphanor should languish and die for your love? The god of Love and his power—I know that they will repay you ill; and I myself, I will say all the evil I can about you, if you will not grant me soon that if he loves you, you love him."

"Parrot, may God advise me, again I tell you that I am astonished that you know how to speak so well. And since you want so much to entreat me on behalf of Antiphanor, your master, I beg you, by the god of Love, go away, you have been here too long, and I pray you to tell him that I will soon agree and that I will reveal my desires to him. If he still wants so much to love me, you may give him this much encouragement, that, through your prayers, I will love him, and that I will never separate from him. Take him this ring for me—there is none more beautiful in the world, I think—with this ribbon embroidered with gold, and let him receive it, for my friendship. Be sure that you don't delay, and you will find me again in this garden."

With that, the parrot replied, saying, "Lady, may God reward me, it is an excellent gift, and I will take it to him, truly. Since you are so well disposed toward him, I will greet him on your behalf. Lady, may God, Who never lied, grant you Antiphanor as your love, and let me see, within a year, that you love him with all your heart, without deception."

With that, they ended their conversation. Then, since he cared greatly for the lady and Antiphanor, he went from the garden of joy at once, straight to his master and told him all that he had done. He began first to speak of the great worth and beauty of the lady, may my faith assist me, and in that, he acted with courtesy. Then he said, "My lord, no one will ever raise a parrot who will speak as well for his master as I have done, for your love. I went secretly into the garden; I didn't want anyone to be able to follow my tracks, for I would rather be free than a captive. I found the lady, truly, and I offered your love to her. She sends you this ring, the most beautiful in the world, I think, with this ribbon embroidered with gold, so you would take it for her friendship. Take it for her love, and may God give you benefit and honour from it. But I have no idea why we don't take the opportunity to make our way carefully into the garden: I'm not sure what advice to give you about this: but my idea would be to set fire to the tower and to the roof, for your love. Once the fire has been lighted, you can enter easily, make your approaches to your lady, hold her in your arms and embrace her."

Antiphanor replied quickly, "First return to the meeting-place, and please, speak with her; then, reveal these plans to her." With that, the two of them separated.

The parrot is certainly a loyal and sincere friend to him. He flies toward the garden, finds the lady under a pine tree, and greets her in his language: "Lady, may God Who created you grant you what you most desire and preserve you from evil and difficulties, that is, if you are willing to love your knight as loyally as he loves you, without fail."

"Parrot, may God advise me, if all the world were mine, I would give it all, with a willing heart, for the love of Antiphanor. But this garden is too well enclosed, and the guards never rest. They must watch until the morning, and they do not relax, all night long."

"Lady, do you have no plan?"

"I do not, and I am not surprised that you don't either."

"But, lady, I do! Hear me out. I will return to my master, whom I left, lost in thoughts of love. Before nightfall, I will bring him here and lead him to the foot of the wall. I will bring, if it please you, Greek fire, with which I will set fire to the belfry, the tower and the roof. And when the fire has caught, they'll all come running at once, for they'll want to put it out at all costs. Then you must not delay! Prepare for him, and let him in, and then you will be able to speak with him. If this seems to you to be a good plan, in spite of what the jealous man may think, you may have delight with him, and lie together with him, in one bed."

With that, the lady said, "It pleases me. Go now to get him at once."

With that, the parrot went to Antiphanor, who was waiting for him. He found him on his horse, all equipped with his armour; he wore his helmet and his hauberk, and his iron greaves as well; he had on his spurs of gold, and his sword was fastened at his side. The parrot came before him. "Lord," he said, "in my opinion tonight you will see that which you most love, in good faith. Your lady requests, through me, that you come to her directly. Be off! And ride quietly so that no man may hear you as you pass, and no one may know anything about your plans, unless they guess. But still we need the Greek fire in an iron or steel pot. I will take it in my claws—give me some right away."

On the spot, Antiphanor gave him as much of it as he wanted. They rode so hard that by nightfall that were near the tower. The watchmen cried out from the belfry: one went to look, and passed the news along: they would keep watch until the morning, and not relax, all night long. With that, Antiphanor dismounted and took off all his equipment, putting it near the horse, keeping only his steel sword, which he wanted to keep fastened to his side: but there was no need, you may believe me. Fearlessly, securely, he moved toward the foot of the wall. The parrot, from the other side, went into the garden, for he was anxious to start the fire, since he had left his lord alone, but fearless.

First he came before the lady, as if he was a sparrow-hawk; he stopped right at her feet, and then said to her at once, "Lady, I have left my lord disarmed, at the large gate. Prepare for him, and let him in, while I go set fire to the castle."

"Parrot, in my prudence, I have made all the preparations. I have the keys of the castle with me, here, on this cushion. Go, set fire to the castle!" I do not believe that any bird ever performed such a daring exploit as this, or even attempted it. And the parrot, without being seen flew up to the tower, near the terrace, went to set fire to the roof. The fire took hold in four corners, and the cry rose up at once: they all cried "Fire!" with one voice.

The lady came to the gate, and opened it, without the permission of the watchmen, and against their will. Antiphanor came into the garden, and in a bed beneath a laurel he lay down with his lady. No one could possibly tell what delight there was between those two, nor which enjoyed the other more. It was their belief, it seems to me, that this was their paradise. There was ecstasy in their engagement, and the fire was quickly extinguished: they doused it with vinegar.

The parrot thought he would die, he was so afraid for his master. He came to them as quickly as he could, and stopped quite near the bed, and said, "Why don't you get up? Come on now, you must separate, for the fire has been completely extinguished."

Antiphanor was heartbroken. He rose, and then he said, "Lady, what do you wish to command me?"

"Lord, that you exert yourself to behave as valiantly as you can in this world, as long as you live." She went toward him and kissed him three times. Antiphanor departed quickly, like the son of a king, on his charger.

So says Arnaut de Carcassès, who has addressed many an entreaty to ladies, to teach a lesson to husbands who want to keep a watch on their wives. Let them follow their own ways: that would be better, for in that case no one will be at fault.

The Jealous Man Chastised

RAMON VIDAL DE BESALÚ

Occitan, early 13th century

I wish to tell you a tale that I heard told by a minstrel at the court of the wisest king of any faith who ever lived, the King of Castile, Lord Alfonso, a man of hospitality, generosity, wit, valour, courtesy and great chivalric ability. He was neither anointed nor consecrated: but was crowned with worth, and wisdom, and loyalty, valour and prowess. The king had assembled many knights and many minstrels at his court, and many powerful barons. When the court was all gathered, Queen Eleanor arrived. One couldn't really see her at all, for she came all enveloped in a mantle of fine and beautiful silk cloth, the kind that is called "cisclaton." It was red with a band of silver, and there was a golden lion embroidered on it. She bowed to the king, and then she sat down some distance away from him.

Right then a jongleur came quietly toward the generous, noble king, and said, "O king of worth, emperor, I have come here to you and I ask you, please, that my tale may be heard and heeded."

The king called out, "My love is lost to anyone who speaks before this man has finished all that he wants to say." Then the prudent minstrel began:

"Noble king, adorned with worth, I have come to you from my lodgings in order to tell and recount to you an adventure which happened in the land where I've come from to an Aragonese vassal. You know well who this vassal is; he is named Alfonso de Barbastre. Hear now, my lord, what a disaster came to him through his jealousy.

"He had a beautiful and charming wife, and she never played him false with any man. She wouldn't even listen to the entreaties of any man in the country, except one, and therefore she was suspected. This man was one of her own household, who held a fief from her husband. Love overpowered him so much that from time to time he would entreat Lady Elvira, the wife of his lord. This made her very angry in heart, but she decided to endure his entreaties rather than denounce him to her husband for something that might lead to his destruction. He was esteemed as a knight, and her husband honoured him greatly, for in good chivalry he had no equal in all Aragon …"

"Then," said the king, "this must have been the courteous Bascol de Cotanda!"

"Yes, my lord. Now hear the rest, and how he fared with the fair Lady Elvira. Nothing of what a man desires could he win or obtain from her, until finally the husband found out. For his knights told him, all together, in full council: 'By God, what foolishness Sir Bascol is committing! Every day he entreats and beseeches Milady, and I tell you that she accepts it so well that you'll be a cuckold for certain.'

"'God help me,' he answered, 'if I wouldn't be blamed for it, you'd all be burned or hanged! This is something quite unbelievable! You are all saying it from envy, because of his surpassing worth and intelligence. May God never save my head if anyone ever tells me tales about what Lady Elvira does and I don't hang him by the neck, for he won't find any protection.'

"Then a knight spoke up, a vile, wicked, and frivolous man: 'My lord, when you've finished your talking and mocking and threatening, I'll be glad to tell you how you can find out for sure about all this, whether Milady loves or not. Pretend that you want to go help the king of Leon in a war. If you can drag Sir Bascol away from this land and take him with you, you can exact the penalty on my body: I deliver it here to you publicly.'"

"And I accept it," interrupted the king.

"With that," (the minstrel continued) "the council dispersed. One of those who heard this ran, by the orders of his lord, to the lodgings of Sir Bascol.

"'Sir Bascol de Cotanda,' he said, 'my lord greets you and asks you if he can have you with him in the morning, for he wants to go to give help in war to the king of Leon, without fail.'

"'So help me God,' he replied, 'I'll go with him most willingly.' Then he whispered softly and quietly, 'I won't do it at all; I can't.'

"The messenger, full of wickedness, returned to report to his lord: 'My lord, I've been to see that traitor of yours, and he says that he'll go with you. He says he will, but he certainly won't: I'm quite sure that it would be painful to him.'

"Nevertheless, the lord wasn't upset, when he heard that his knight made no objection to going with him. 'The one who should be afraid is the man who put himself in my power and delivered himself to me to be put to death. Nothing can save him from death if Sir Bascol goes on the expedition; he won't change my decision by promises or prayers.'

"Then he took to the road, saying that he was going to see Sir Bascol, whom Love was making suffer and lament; and as he lamented, he often said with deep sighing, night and day, 'Love, you make me act most foolishly, for I'm treating my lord in such a way that if he could only find it out, nothing could save my life. And he surely will be able to find it out, for I won't go, not for anything, where my lord wants me to go. Still, it hasn't been his way to gather an army that I don't go with, or engage in a battle without taking me. If I say no this time, he'll surely know the reason, I think, why I have stayed behind.

"'But I know what I can do: I'll tell him that I've been sick, and that I'm not better yet, and so the doctor advised me to have some blood let.' So he had his arms bound, and his head wrapped tightly with a bandage, and said that God should give him no joy if he ever went there, unless he was forced. For Love, which made him sail close to the wind, had seized his will and driven him mad.

"Just then, Lord Alfonso called out loudly at the gate, and it was quickly opened for him. He came inside and Sir Bascol greeted him: 'My lord, may God Who mounted the cross for us give you aid!'

"'Yes, and to you, Bascol,' said the lord, 'may God give you joy and health. But tell me, what has happened to you?'

"'By Christ my lord, a great sickness.'

"'So what will happen? I want to go on an expedition. Will you not come along?'

"'My lord, may God and my faith assist me, you can see well that I can't go there, and it troubles me greatly, God save me.'

"'And me also' said the lord, 'Sir Bascol, twice as much, by my faith, since I can't change my plans and not go. I must be off; I commend you to God.'

"'And I, my lord, commend you to His mother.'

"With that, the good lord went away, and the knight stayed behind.

"Early in the morning on the next day, the lord had his horses saddled, took his leave without delay, and went out of the castle at once, furious and full of ill will because Sir Bascol stayed behind. He came to a castle about two leagues away, and as soon as the day was done, he saddled his horse, and mounted up, taking a young valet along behind him. He took to the road and returned straight to Barbastre, saying that he would give his wife bad medicine that night, if he could. He spurred his horse and rode at full speed until he came quietly up to a small door in the castle, under his wife's chamber.

"He left his horse with his valet, saying 'Wait here for me, my friend.' Then he stepped forth and knocked quietly with his hand. When the good lady, with a clear conscience, heard the knock at the door she said, 'Girl, get up, get up at once and go see who it is, girl, for I'm not expecting any knight or anyone else... Ah!' she said, 'may God forsake me, if I don't think it is my lord, who has come back to test my relationship with Sir Bascol, since he didn't follow him today.'

"He knocked a second time: 'Get up at once, girl!'

"She said, 'I won't wait any longer, 'but I'll go see who is there right now.' She opened the door at once, and as soon as he came in, he said 'Girl, you've made me wait here too long; why didn't you come to open the door for me? Didn't you know I was coming?'

"'No, my lord, may God give me good fortune.' Then the lord of Barbastre approached, pretending to be a lover, and went straight up to the bed. He knelt at once, saying, 'Beautiful, courteous lady, here is your heart's friend, and, by God, don't take it amiss that, because of you, I failed to accompany my lord, for which he is angry. The love which oppresses me did not let me go elsewhere, and leave you, be separated from you, and I have sighed many times for it.'

"'But tell me, my lord, who are you?'

"'Madame, do you not know me? It's me, your love, Bascol, who has loved you so long.'

"The lady rose at once to her feet, and recognized him: it was her husband, but that did him no good, for she called out as loud as she could, 'By Christ! You traitor! No attack have you ever made that will bring you more trouble, for you'll be hanged at once, and nothing can save you from death.' She grabbed his hair and began to pull as hard as she could, with both hands. But 'woman's strength is vain,' and soon tires after great effort, and 'with a heavy club gives tiny blows.' When she had drubbed him enough and beaten him and humiliated him, without him ever striking a blow in return, she went out of the room and closed the door, leaving her husband behind, joyful as if he felt no pain at all, for it seemed to him that she was faithful.

"She didn't stop until she reached the room of the knight who was so tormented by Love, and he found what he most desired: she took him, and drew him to herself, and told him all that had happened to her. 'Handsome, courteous friend,' she said, 'now I will give you willingly what you have always desired. Love wants it, and permits it to me. Let's leave the buck on his rope, at least until day, and we'll take our pleasure!' And so they stayed, with great delight, both in one bed, until the morning bells rang and the lady arose.

"She went out, and summoned everyone from their lodgings, and told them her story: 'Hear now' she said, 'how that scoundrel Sir Bascol tried to deceive me. Last night he came knocking at the door, pretending to be my lord. He came in like a traitor, approached my bed, and wanted to dishonour me. But I knew how to defend myself, and I've locked him in my bedroom.'

"Everyone gave thanks to God. 'Lady,' they said, 'it has turned out very well for you, provided that he dies at once. A traitor must not be allowed to live.' They went at once to arm themselves, and ran at once to their lodgings. Then would you have seen some putting on hauberks, others grabbing doublets and shields, headgear, caps, and pointed helmets, others taking up lances and darts. At once they came from all directions, candles and torches burning.

"When Lord Alfonso heard these people coming toward him, all armed, he bolted the doors from inside, and cried out, 'My lords, stop! By God, the Son of Holy Mary, I am your master, Lord Alfonso!' But they battered the doors so violently that the wood and iron couldn't resist. When he heard them breaking in he jumped quickly on a ladder and climbed up to a loft, throwing the ladder away. When they had completely smashed the door, they came toward the bed with their weapons and struck it as hard as they could, for they all thought that he was there. When they didn't find him in it, they were all angry and furious, and the lady was saddened in heart. While they were searching around for him, she glanced up at the loft, and saw, off to one side, the ladder which her husband had thrown aside.

"She came back and called to the household, 'Gentlemen, I've spotted the traitor. See, he's up in that loft! Get the ladder and climb up! Cut him into little pieces before he has a chance to say a word!'

"Lord Alfonso cried out at once, 'Gentlemen, what kind of people are you? Doesn't anyone recognize Lord Alfonso, your lawful master? It's me, so help me God! Don't kill me, in the name of God!'

"The lady sighed, and as he was coming down, she cried out when everyone recognized her husband; she cried, wept, groaned and called out 'Sweet my lord, how could you dare to make such a foolish attempt? No man born of woman was ever in such danger of death. Sweet, noble, generous lord, for the love of God, pardon me. Please, let me find mercy from you, my lord, for I didn't recognize you, so help me the Son of Holy Mary! On the contrary, I thought you were Sir Bascol de Cotanda.'

"'God save me,' he replied, 'you have done me no shame or harm for which you need to ask forgiveness. Rather I, the falsest man, the greatest traitor who ever was born, dear lady—pardon me! For I have deceived myself and brought shame upon your person! Wrongly and foolishly I have hated my own good knight. It is through the fault of slanderers that all this torment came to me and this misadventure! Dear lady, noble and pure, pardon me, for the love of God, and please, let me find mercy from you, let our two hearts be one! I promise you that never for any reason will I believe what slanderers say about you, and there will be no adversary able to cause trouble between us.'

"'Now,' she said, 'send word of that to Sir Bascol, my lord, by your messenger.'

"'I will do it willingly and joyfully, since I see that it would please you, my lady.'

"'Yes, my lord, and do still more: you will go to see Sir Bascol and tell him that you stayed here on his account, waiting until he was cured.' He left the room then, and did what she commanded. He went to see Sir Bascol de Cotanda, and sent him his knights for never had such great joy come to a man from his own harm.

"And shall I tell you something more? He arrived at the lodgings of his vassal Sir Bascol and ran straight to his bed. He was lying, quiet and peaceful, with the windows closed. 'Bascol,' he said, 'how are you feeling?'

"'By Christ, my lord, I am not well, and I'm surely in need of health. But how is it that you have come back so soon?' said Sir Bascol to his lord.

"'Bascol, it is for love of you that I stayed, and will stay: I will not go on any expedition unless you come with me.'

"'My lord, I'll get better, God willing, and then I will do for you willingly all that you wish.'

"Lord Alfonso returned to his lodgings, and was very pleased for his misfortune. That was a good thing, God help me, for he had suspected a lady who had done nothing wrong. But when it came to deception, she was much smarter than he, in my opinion.

"And so, noble king, I pray you, both you and my lady the queen, before whom worth and beauty bow, that you forbid jealousy in all the married men who are in your land. For women have such power, yes they surely have such power, that they can make a lie seem true and the truth seem false, when they want, since they have such subtle minds. Let men avoid the role of the jealous husband, so that they will not always be in doubt,

and sorrowful and angry. The man who is ruled by jealousy often sighs and laments. He won't do anything that is good, for in all the world there is no more harmful disease, my lord, than jealousy, nor more foolish or more shameful. It makes a man less hospitable, and he entertains less often, inviting fewer guests, for he's always afraid it will bring trouble."

"Minstrel, I consider this story good and charming and fine, and so are you who told it to me. I wish to give you sure proof, so that you may know truly that the story pleased me. I declare that, among us, the story will always be known as *The Jealous Man Chastised*."

When the king had finished speaking, there was in the court no baron or knight, no damsel or young gentleman, not a single man or woman, who hadn't enjoyed hearing it, who didn't praise and approve it, and each one was eager to learn *The Jealous Man Chastised*.

"The Sin of Being Seen"

from The Rule for Anchoresses

English, ca. 1225

Omni custodia serua cor tuum quoniam ex ipso uita procedit. [Proverbs 4:23]. "With every kind watchfulness, O daughter," says Solomon, "guard your heart well, for the life of the soul is in it if it is kept locked." The guardians of the heart are the five senses: sight and hearing, taste and smell, and the feeling of every member of the body; and we will speak of all these. For whoever guards these well carries out Solomon's command: he guards his heart and the health of his soul well.

The heart is a very wild animal and makes many a light leap, as St. Gregory says: *Nichil corde fugacius* [*Regula Pastoralis*, III: XIV (P.L. 77, col. 72)]. "Nothing escapes from a man more quickly than his own heart." David, God's prophet, lamented once that his heart had escaped from him: *Cor meum dereliquid me* [Psalm 39:13], that is, "My heart has fled from me"; and later he rejoiced and said that it had come home again: *Inuenit seruus tuus cor suum* [Cf. 2 Samuel 7:27]. "Lord," he said, "my heart has come back to me again. I have found it." If a man so holy, so wise and so watchful allowed his heart to escape from him, others may very well be worried about the flight of theirs too! And where did it break away from the holy king David, God's prophet? God knows, it was at the window of his eye; through a sight that he saw, through beholding something, as you shall later hear.

Therefore, my dear sisters, love your windows as little as possible. Let them all be small, and those of the parlour smallest and also narrowest. Let their curtains be made of two kinds of material, black cloth with a white cross both inside and outside. The black cloth signifies that you are black and unworthy with respect to the outside world, and that the True Sun has burnt you [Cf. Song of Songs 1:5] outwardly and made you unsightly on the outside, through the shining of His grace. The white cross properly belongs to you: there are three crosses, red, black, and white. The red belongs to those who left this life reddened by the shedding of their own blood for the love of God, like the martyrs. The black cross belongs to those who do their penance in this world for hateful sins. The white belongs properly to white maidenhood and to purity, which is very hard to preserve. Hardship is always signified by the cross. Thus the white cross signifies the keeping of white chastity, which is guarded with great hardship. As well as being significant, black cloth is also less harmful to the eyes and thicker against the wind and harder to see through, and it keeps its colour better against the wind and other such things. See that the parlour window is fastened and well locked on every side, and guard your eyes there so that your heart does not escape and go out like David's and your soul become sick as soon as it has gone. Much of what I write is for others, and does not

concern you, my dear sisters, for you do not have the reputation (nor will you ever have it, by God's grace) of anchoresses who peep out or who use enticing looks and behaviour as some, alas, sometimes do, inappropriately. For it is against nature and a strange and marvellous thing for the dead to grow foolish and act madly with those who are alive, in sin.

"But, dear Master," someone may say, "is it then excessively evil to peep out?" Yes, it is, dear sister, because of the evil which comes from it. It is evil, excessively evil in any anchoress, especially in the young—and even in the old because they give a examples to the younger ones, and a shield to defend themselves. For if anyone reproaches them, they say at once, "But, Sir, she does it too, and she is better than I am." Dear daughter, a very skilful smith often forges a very poor knife. Follow the wise in their wisdom, and not in their folly. It may be good for an old anchoress to do something which would be evil for you to do; but peeping out without any harm is not possible for either of you. Now consider what evil came about from looking, not one evil or two, but all the misery that there is now, and ever has been and ever will be: all this arose through sight. Here is proof that this is true.

Because Lucifer looked and beheld his own beauty in himself, he leaped into pride, and from being an angel he became a hateful devil. Concerning Eve, our first mother, it is written that at the very beginning her sin's entry was through her eyes. *Vidit mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad uescendum & pulchrum. oculis aspectu delectabile. & tulit de fructu eius & commedit deditque viro suo*. [Genesis 3:6]. That is, Eve looked upon the forbidden apple and saw that it was fair; she began to take delight in the beholding; the desire drew her to it, and she took some of it, and ate some of it, and gave it to her husband. Observe how Holy Writ speaks of this, and how it tells how sin began internally. Sight went before and prepared a way for evil desire; from it came the deed which affected all mankind. This apple, my dear sister, signifies all those things toward which desire and the delight of sin turn. When you look at a man, you are in Eve's situation: you are looking on the apple. If anyone had said to Eve, when she first turned her eyes to it: "Oh, Eve, turn away! You are casting your eyes upon your death," what would she have answered? "My dear sir, you are mistaken. What are you accusing me of? The apple I am looking at was forbidden to me to *eat*, not to *look at*." Eve would have answered like this quickly enough. My dear sisters, Eve has many daughters who follow their mother, and answer in the same way. "But do you think," someone will say, "that I will leap on him because I look at him?" God knows, sister, more surprising things have happened! Your mother Eve leaped after her eyes; from the eye to the apple, from the apple in paradise down to the earth, and from earth to hell where she lay imprisoned for four thousand years and more, she and her husband both. She condemned all her children to leap after her to endless death. The beginning and the root of all this misery was a little glance. Thus, as they say, much often comes of little. Let every weak woman, then, have great fear, since she who had just been shaped by the

hands of God was deceived by a sight and led into that great sin which has since spread over the whole world.

Egressa est Dina, filia Iacob, ut uideret mulieres & cetera. [Genesis 24:1]. It says in Genesis that a maiden called Dinah, Jacob's daughter, went out to look at the foreign women. It does not say that she looked at men. and yet what do you think happened as a result of that looking? She lost her maidenhood and then became a harlot. Later, also because of it, the promises of great patriarchs were broken, a great city was burned, the king and his son and the men of the city were killed and the women led away; her father and her brothers, noble princes though they were, were outlawed. This resulted from her looking. All these things the Holy Ghost caused to be written down in a book to warn women about their foolish eyes. Notice that this evil of Dinah's did not result from her seeing Sichem the son of Hamor, with whom she sinned, but from allowing him to set eyes upon her; for what he did to her was, at the beginning, much against her will.

So also did Bathsheba [2 Samuel 11]: by unclothing herself before David's eyes, she made him sin with her, even though he was so holy a king and God's prophet. But now there comes forth a weak man comes forward, and he thinks he's so smashing in his wide hood and his closed cloak, and he wants to see some young anchoresses. He just has to look, as if he were made of stone, to see how the beauty of a woman whose face is not burned by the sun pleases him. He says that she may look fearlessly at holy men, such as he is, in his wide sleeves! But oh, you haughty man, do you not hear what happened to David, the God's beloved, of whom God Himself said, *Inueni virum secundum cor meum* [Acts 13:22]; "I have found," He said, "a man after my own heart"? This man, whom God Himself in these precious words called His king and prophet, chosen above all others, this man, through casting his eyes on a woman while she was bathing, let out his heart and forgot himself so far that he committed three great deadly sins: adultery with Bathsheba, the lady on whom he had looked; treachery; and manslaughter of his true soldier, her husband Uriah. And you, a sinful man, are so bold as to cast your foolish eyes upon a young woman! My dear sisters, if anyone is so eager to see you, believe no good of it and think the less of him for it. I do not want anyone to see you without special permission from your master. All the three sins which I just mentioned, and all the evil that came from Dinah—all this happened, not because the women looked lustfully upon the men, but because they undressed themselves in men's sight, and did something through which they might fall into sin.

For this reason it was commanded in God's law that a pit should always be covered, and that if anyone left a pit uncovered and an animal fell into it, he had to pay the penalty. This is a very terrible statement for the woman who shows herself to men's sight. She is signified by the man who uncovers the pit. The pit is her fair face, and her white neck, and her bright eye, and her hand if she holds it out before his eyes. Her words, too, are a pit, unless they are controlled, and any and all other things connected with her through which sinful love may easily be aroused. All this Our Lord calls a pit.

He commands that this pit should always be covered with a lid, so that no animal falls into it and perishes in sin. "Animal" here means the animal man who does not think about God and does not use his reason as a man ought to do, but goes on to fall into this pit of which I am speaking, if he finds it open.

But the judgment on her who uncovers the pit is very stern. She must pay for the animal that has fallen into it. She is guilty, before Our Lord, of the animal's death and must answer for his soul on the Day of Judgment, and make restitution for the loss of the animal, when she has nothing to pay with but herself. This is a hard penalty; but it is God's judgment and His command that she must pay it, without fail, because she uncovered the pit in which the animal perished. You uncover this pit, you who do anything by which a man is carnally tempted by you, even though you are unaware of it. Have great fear of this judgment! If he is tempted so that he commits mortal sin through you in any way, even though it is not with you, but through desire for you, or if he tries to satisfy with another person the temptation awakened in him through your doing, be quite sure of the judgment: you will pay for the animal because you laid open the pit, and unless you are absolved, you will pay for his sin. The dog goes in gladly wherever he finds an entrance.

Tyolet

French, early 13th century

Long ago, when Arthur reigned and governed Britain (also called England) there were not, I believe, as many people there as there are now. But Arthur, who was highly honoured, had with him knights who were very courageous and bold. There are still plenty of knights who are quite famous and brave, but they are not the kind of men there were in the past. Then the strongest, best, and most generous knights used to set forth to seek and find adventures, night and day; even when they did not have squires, still they always travelled. They might not find a house or tower, or two or three, and similarly in the dark of night they would find marvellous adventures which they used to tell and relate.

These adventures were re-told at court just as they happened: the learned scholars who lived then wrote them all down. They were put into Latin and written on parchment, in case there might again be a time when people would want to listen to them. Now they are told and recounted, translated from Latin into French; as our ancestors tell us, the Bretons composed numerous poems about them.

I will tell you one of them which they composed, following the story as I know it, about a fine and clever young man, hardy, bold, and courageous. He was called Tyolet, and he was very good at capturing beasts; he would catch all the beasts that he wanted by his whistle. A fairy had given him this gift and taught him how to whistle: God never made any beast that Tyolet could not capture by his whistle.

His mother was a lady who lived at that time in a forest. She had been married to a knight who lived there night and day. He stayed all alone in the forest; there was not a house within ten leagues. Fifteen years had passed since he died, and Tyolet had grown up handsome and tall. But he had never seen an armed knight during his whole life, nor did he see other people very often. He stayed in the woods with his mother and never left them. He had remained in the forest, for his mother loved him very much. So he wandered wherever he pleased, since he had nothing else to do. When the beasts heard him whistle they would all come to him at once, and he would kill the ones that he wanted and take them to his mother. In this way he and his mother lived; he had no sister or brother.

The lady was very noble and always acted reliably. One day she asked her son—graciously, because she loved him very much—to go into the woods and capture a stag. He carried out her wish; he went at once into the woods just as his mother had ordered. He travelled through the woods until the middle of the morning without finding any beast or stag; he was very upset with himself because he had found no beast. He wanted to go straight home, when he saw a big fat stag standing under a tree.

He whistled immediately. The stag heard him and looked, but paid him no attention and just went away. It left the woods at a gentle pace, and Tyolet followed the stag until it led him right to a river. The stag crossed over; the river was big, swift-flowing, wide, long, and dangerous. When the stag had crossed the river, Tyolet looked around and saw a huge, fleshy roebuck coming toward him. He stopped and whistled, and the roebuck came toward him. Tyolet put out his hand and killed the beast. He drew his knife and thrust it into its body. While he was flaying the roebuck, the stag, which had crossed the river, changed its shape and appeared as a knight, completely dressed in armour near the edge of the water. He was mounted upon a war horse with flowing mane and armed as a knight should be. The youth saw him; he had never before seen such a sight. He looked on in amazement and stared for a long time. He was astonished to see such a thing as he had never seen before.

As he watched intently, the knight addressed him and spoke to him first, in a good and kindly way; he asked Tyolet who he was, what he was searching for, and what his name was. Tyolet replied that he was very valiant and courageous, the son of the widow woman who lived in the great forest, "and those who want to call me by name, call me Tyolet. Now tell me, if you can, who are you, and what is your name?"

The man who was standing on the shore answered him at once that he was called a "knight." Tyolet asked what kind of beast a "knight" was, where it lived, and where it came from.

"By my faith," he answered, "I will tell you without a word of a lie. It is a very dreaded beast which captures and eats other beasts, and it quite often stalks the woods as well as the plain."

"By my faith," said Tyolet, "I am astonished to hear that! Never, since I learned to walk and started travelling through the woods, have I ever found such a beast! I know about bears and lions and all other kinds of game. There is not a beast in the woods that I do not know, and I capture them all without any trouble; but you I do not recognize at all! You seem to be a brave beast. Now tell me, Knight-Beast, what is that on your head? And what is that hanging around your neck? It's so red and so shiny!"

"By my faith," says the knight, "I will tell you without a word of a lie. This is a kind of a headpiece called a 'helmet,' and it is made of steel all around. And this is mantle that I a, wearing is a shield striped with gold."

"And what is that thing you are wearing, which is full of little holes?"

"It is a tunic of finely-wrought iron; it is called a 'hauberk.'"

"And what are you wearing on your feet? Kindly tell me."

"They are called iron greaves; they are well-made and well-wrought."

"And what is that which you have girded on? Tell me, if you please."

"It is called a sword and is very beautiful; its blade is sharp and sturdy."

"And that long piece of wood that you carry? Tell me and do not keep it from me."

"Do you want to know?"

"Yes, indeed."

"It is a lance that I carry with me. Now I have told you the truth about everything that you have asked me."

"Sir," said Tyolet, "I thank you. Would to God who does not lie that I might have clothes such as you have, so beautiful, so fine, and that I could have a tunic and a mantle such as you have, and the same kind of hat! Now tell me, Knight-Beast, by God and His feast day, if there are other beasts such as you, ones as beautiful as you."

"Yes," said the knight, "truly. I will show you more than a hundred of them."

Just a little later, according to the story, two hundred armed knights from the court of the King came out through the middle of a meadow. They had carried out the King's orders: they had captured a stronghold and put it to the torch, reducing it to ashes. They were all returning from there armed, in three well-ordered squadrons.

Then Knight-Beast spoke to Tyolet and ordered him to go just a bit farther on and look across the river. Tyolet obeyed his order, looked rapidly about and saw the knights coming, fully armed on their chargers.

"By my faith," he said, "I see the beasts who all have hats on their heads. I have never seen such beasts before, nor such hats as I see here! Would to God that I were a Knight-Beast!"

The man who stood armed on the shore spoke to Tyolet again: "Would you be brave and bold?"

"Yes, by my faith I swear it to you."

And so he said: "Now you must leave. When you see your mother again, and when she speaks to you, she will say: 'Dear son, tell me what you are thinking and what is troubling you.' Tell her at once that you have much to think about, that you want to be like the Knight-Beast that you saw, and that this is why you are thoughtful. She will tell you immediately that she is sorry that you have seen the beast that traps and kills others. And you tell her that by your faith she will find no joy in you if you cannot be such a beast and have such a hat on your head. And as soon as she hears this, at once she will bring you an outfit exactly like this—a tunic and a mantle, a hat and a belt, shoes and a long, flat piece of wood just like those you have seen here."

Then Tyolet departed, for he was eager to get home. He gave his mother the roebuck which he had brought and told her his adventure exactly as it had happened. His mother replied quickly that she was very upset that "You have seen a beast like this which captures and eats others!"

"By my faith," says Tyolet, "this is how things stand: if I cannot be such a beast as the one I saw, I know for certain that you will have little joy from me!"

But when his mother heard this, she answered him at once. She immediately brought to him all of the arms that she had—those which had belonged to her husband. She armed her son very well with them, and when he had mounted the horse, he indeed resembled a Knight-Beast.

"Do you know now, dear son, what you must do? Go straight to King Arthur, and I will give you this advice: do not take as your companion any man and do not pay court to any woman of the common sort." Then he turned away from her, after she kissed and embraced him.

Tyolet journeyed so far and so long, over hills, through fields and valleys, that he came to the court of the King, who was a courteous and valiant king. The King was sitting at dinner, having himself served magnificently. Tyolet entered, fully armed, just as he had come. He rode his horse up to the dais, where Arthur the King was sitting.

He didn't utter a word to him, nor did he even address him.

"My friend," said the King, "dismount and come eat with us, and tell me what you are searching for, who you are, what name you have."

"By my faith," said Tyolet, "I will tell you, and I will not eat before so doing. King, my name is "Knight-Beast," I have cut off many heads, and people call me Tyolet; I know very well how to capture game. I am the son, my dear lord, if it please you, of the widow of the forest. She has sent me to you to learn all that is appropriate. I want to learn good skills and courtesy and knighthood, and how to tourney and to joust, to spend and to give generously. For I have never before been at the court of a king; nor was there ever, I firmly believe, any other place where there was so much wealth and culture, chivalry and learning. Now I have told you what I am seeking, King, now tell me your opinion."

The King said to him, "Sir Knight, I take you into my service. Come and eat."

"My lord," said Tyolet, "I thank you."

When Tyolet dismounted, he was disarmed and dressed in a tunic and wrapped in a light mantle. He washed his hands and went to eat.

Suddenly a maiden arrived there—a proud and noble damsel; I do not wish to describe her beauty, but neither Dido, in my opinion, nor Helen had so beautiful a face. She was the daughter of the King of Logres. She was seated on a white palfrey and brought a small white hound following behind her. She had hung a small golden bell around the neck of the white hound, whose coat was very delicate and clean. Still on her horse, she came before the King and greeted him.

"My lord King Arthur, may omnipotent God who reigns on high save you!"

"May He who protects good people also care for you, my pretty friend."

"My lord, I am the daughter of a king and queen; my father is the King of Logres, and he and my mother have no other children. Out of love they ask you, as a king of great worth, if any one of your knights would be bold and fierce enough to cut off the white foot of the stag. Noble Sir, he would give it to me, and I would take such a man as my husband and have no interest in any other. Never will any man have my love if he does not bring me the white foot of the large, beautiful stag, who has such a shiny coat that it looks almost golden. It is well-guarded, by seven lions."

"By my faith," said the King, "I promise you that such will be the covenant. The man who gives you the foot of the stag will have you as his wife."

"And I, Lord King, for my part, agree that such is the covenant."

They swore to and established such a covenant between the two of them. In all the hall every knight who considered himself of any value said that he would go look for the stag if he could.

"This hunting dog," she said, "will lead you to where the stag is accustomed to travel."

Lodoer was very eager for it, and he was the first to go looking for the stag. He asked King Arthur, and the King did not forbid him to do it. He took the small hound, mounted his horse, and went out to get the foot of the stag. The hound which accompanied him led him straight to a river that was big and wide, black, menacing, and swollen; it was four hundred fathoms wide and at least a hundred deep. The hound went straight into the water, thinking after its instincts that Lodoer would plunge in as well, but he did nothing of the kind. He decided that he would not go in, for he had no desire to die. He said to himself thoughtfully: "He who does not have himself has nothing; he keeps a good castle, it seems to me, who takes care of it so that it is not harmed!" So the dog came out of the water and returned to Lodoer; and Lodoer went away, leading the hound behind him. He came straight to the court without delay, where many lords were assembled. He returned the hound to the courteous, beautiful maiden.

Then the King asked him if he had brought the foot, and Lodoer answered him that someone else still had the chance to be shamed because of it. Throughout the hall they mocked him; Lodoer shook his head at them, and said that *they* should go look for the foot and bring it back.

Many went to seek the stag, and they asked for the maiden, but no one else who went there sang a song any different from the one that Lodoer—who was a valiant knight—had sung, except one knight who was very brave and agile; he was called Knight-Beast, and Tyolet was his name.

Tyolet went directly to the King and asked at once that the maiden be kept for him, and he would go to seek the white foot. He said that he would never return until he had cut off the white right foot of the stag. The King allowed him to go, and Tyolet was knighted and was well-armed with weapons. Then he went to the maiden and asked her for her small white hound. She gave it to him graciously, and he took his leave of her.

They rode and travelled for so long that they came to the ford at the wide, rushing river, which was very deep and menacing. The hound jumped into the water and went swimming across it at once; Tyolet went in after it immediately. He followed the hound, still mounted on his horse, until he came out on dry land. The hound led him on until it showed him the stag; seven lions guarded the stag, and they loved it with a great love.

Then Tyolet looked and saw it in a meadow where it was grazing; none of the seven lions was near by. Tyolet spurred his horse and made it go straight up to the stag. Then Tyolet began to whistle, and the stag came straight up to him, most gently. Tyolet whistled twice, and the stag at once stood still. He drew his sword swiftly, caught the stag by its white right foot, cut it off at the joint and put it in his pouch. The stag gave a loud cry, and the lions at once rushed up in great haste: they saw Tyolet. One of the lions attacked the horse on which he was sitting in his armour, ripping away the skin and the flesh of its right shoulder. When Tyolet saw that, he struck one of the lions with the sword that he carried and cut the sinews of its chest: he had no more trouble with that lion! His horse fell to the ground beneath him, and as Tyolet abandoned it the lions attacked him. They rushed at him from all sides, ripped his good hauberk and the flesh of his arms and sides, and wounded him in so many places that they very nearly devoured him. They ripped all his flesh, but Tyolet killed every one of them. It was only with difficulty that he freed himself from them. He fell beside the lions who had injured him, and his body was mauled so badly that he would never be able to make it whole again.

Then a knight came riding up, seated on a steel grey charger. He stopped and looked about; he pitied Tyolet and lamented. Tyolet, who had fainted from his efforts, opened his eyes and recounted his adventure to him; he told it from beginning to end. He pulled out the foot from his pouch and gave it to the knight. And the knight thanked him very much for it because he wanted the foot very much. He took his leave of Tyolet and went off.

When he was on his way, he thought to himself that if the knight who had given him the foot remained alive, and if he wasn't willing to flee, something bad might happen to him because of it. He turned back immediately, intending and planning to kill the knight, but he isn't going to issue a challenge. He thrust his sword right through his body. In fact, Tyolet will be cured of this wound, but the knight thought for certain that he had killed him. Then he started on his way, and he followed the direct road until he came to the court of the King.

He asked the King for the maiden, showing him the white foot of the stag; but he did not have the small white hound that had led Tyolet to the stag. He watched for it morning and night, but he really wasn't too worried about it: The one brought the foot—whoever it might be who had cut it off—wanted, according to the covenant, to have the maiden, who was so very noble and beautiful. But the King was wise enough to ask him for a week's delay because of Tyolet who had not returned. Then his whole court would be assembled, but right then, there was no one there but his household men, who were quite noble and learned. So the knight granted the delay and remained at the court.

But Gawain, who was courtly and well-versed in all the laws, went to look for Tyolet; the dog had returned and he took it with him. Quickly, the hound led him until he found Tyolet in a swoon in the meadow beside the lions.

When Gawain saw the knight and the slaughter that he had accomplished, he greatly pitied the valiant knight. At once, he dismounted from his charger and addressed him gently. Tyolet answered feebly, but he managed to tell him the whole story of his adventure.

Then a gentle, beautiful maiden arrived, riding on a mule. She graciously greeted Gawain, and he returned her greeting and he called her to his side and embraced her, holding her tightly. He asked her very sweetly and lovingly to take this knight—who had done such fine deeds—to the doctor of the Black Mountain. And she did as he asked; she conveyed the knight from that place and entrusted him to the doctor. In Gawain's name she entrusted Tyolet to the doctor, who received him willingly. He stripped him of his armour, laid him on a table, and cleaned his wounds, which were very bloody. When he thoroughly examined his body and removed the blood caked all over him, he saw that he would recover. At the end of a month he would be completely well.

In the meantime, Gawain returned and dismounted in the hall. There he found the knight who had brought the white foot, and who had stayed at court long enough for the week to have passed by. Then the knight came to the King, greeted him, and spoke about the agreement that the maiden had devised, and that the King, for his part, had accepted: that she would marry the man who gave her the white foot.

The King said, "This is so."

When Gawain had heard all this, he immediately stepped forward and said to the King, "If it were not that I should never refute any knight, sergeant, knave, or squire in the presence of you who are the King, I would say that he is lying. He never took the foot of the stag in the manner which he maintains. The man who wants to be praised for others' deeds, who wraps himself in another's mantle, who wishes to draw another's crossbow, and have himself praised for another's action, he who wants to joust and drag the dreaded serpent from the hedge by another's hand—he causes great shame to knights! It will soon be clear that what you say is worthless! Make your assault somewhere else; go to get what you want somewhere else, for you will not have the maiden!"

"By my faith," said the knight, "Sir Gawain, now you take me for a villain, saying that I do not dare carry my own lance into combat to joust, that I know well how to draw another's crossbow, and drag out this serpent you are talking about by another's hand! There is no one, so I believe and maintain, who can't find me on the field of battle, if he wants to prove it against me!"

While they were engaged in this dispute, they looked through the hall and saw Tyolet, who had arrived and dismounted outside at the stone. The King rose to meet

him, threw his arms around his neck, and then kissed him with great love. Tyolet bowed before him, as a man does before his lord. Gawain kissed him; Urien, Kay, Yvain the son of Morgan, and Lodoer went up to kiss him, and so did all of the other knights.

When he saw this, the knight who wanted to have the maiden by virtue of the foot he had brought—which Tyolet had given him—spoke again to King Arthur and made his request. But Tyolet, when he learned that the knight had asked for the maiden, spoke to him courteously and asked him calmly: "Sir Knight, tell me this, now as you stand before the King. I want to know for what reason you wish to claim the maiden."

"By my faith," he replied, "I will tell you. It is because I have brought her the white foot of the stag. Both she and the King promised it."

"Did you cut the foot from the stag? If this is the truth, let it not be denied."

"Yes," he said, "I cut if off and I brought it here with me."

"And the seven lions, who killed them?"

The knight looked at him and said not a word, but he blushed with embarrassment.

Tyolet then spoke again: "Sir Knight, who was it who was struck by the sword, and who was it who struck him with it? Tell me this if you please. In my opinion, it was you."

The knight hid his face and was much ashamed.

"But this was returning evil for good when you committed such an outrage. I had given you the foot I had cut from the stag graciously, and you repaid me by very nearly killing me for it. In fact I did almost die. I gave a gift to you; now I regret it. You thrust the sword which you carried through my body, and you certainly thought that I was dead. If you want to defend yourself against this charge, in the sight of these lords, I tender my pledge to King Arthur."

The knight knew that Tyolet was telling the truth and begged for mercy for the blow. He feared death more than shame and in no way contradicted Tyolet's story. In the King's presence, he submitted to Tyolet and promised to do his bidding. And Tyolet pardoned him on the advice which he received on this matter from the King and from all of his lords. The knight fell to his knees and, then would have kissed Tyolet's foot, when Tyolet made him stand up and kissed him with great affection. I never heard this business mentioned again.

The knight returned the foot to Tyolet, and Tyolet took it and gave it to the maiden. She surpassed in beauty both the fleur-de-lys and the blossoming rose when they are new-born in the summertime. So Tyolet asked for the damsel, and King Arthur granted her to him. The maiden accepted him and brought him into her country: he was king and she was queen.

Here ends the *Lai of Tyolet.*

Desiré

French, early 13th century

I will turn my talents and attention to recounting an adventure: those who lived in those days composed a lai to preserve its memory. This is the lai of Desiré, who was so exceedingly handsome. In Scotland there is a region which is called Calatir, near the Blanche Lande, next to the great sea. The beautiful Black Chapel, which is famed in story, is also in that region.

There was once a vavassor who was greatly honoured in his native land. All the territories he had he held as a vassal of the King of Scotland. He had a wife appropriate to his station, and he loved her much because she was prudent. They were unfortunate, however, in that they had no children. Because of this they were extremely sad, and they often prayed to God to comfort them, in His pity, and give them a son or a daughter. One night as they lay in bed, the lady spoke to her husband: "My lord, I have heard that in Provence, across the sea, there is a glorious holy relic: ladies go there with their husbands. No one requests anything from him, no matter what it might be, that he does not grant. He has such grace and power from God, especially in the begetting of children. I feel great sorrow in my heart: my lord, let us get ready and cross the sea and go there."

Her lord granted this request, and they prepared for their journey. Without delay they crossed the sea and went to Saint Giles to pray. They offered him a solid silver image, worth six marks, I am sure, on the altar and asked him for a son or daughter. When they had completed their prayer, they went back to their native land. The lady was pregnant with a son before she had arrived home. The lord was joyful and delighted; he was happier than he had ever been, as were all his kinsfolk. At the time when their son was born, they had him called "Desired One," because they had waited so long without having a child and now Saint Giles had performed a miracle.

They nurtured and protected their son, as they loved him very much; he was handsome in body and face. When he came to the age when he could be separated from them, they sent him to serve the king. He learned to hunt and fish, and took to it gladly. The king loved him and held him dear and made him a knight. When Desiré was a knight, at once he crossed the sea; he became known in Normandy and took part in tournaments in Brittany. He was greatly praised by the French and popular with all other people; then, knighthood was still valued! If a knight came from another country to earn fame, either in tournaments or war, he was never ambushed or sold out by his companions.

Desiré was there for ten years without going home. He did very well and progressed well, until the king sent for him. He came to his territories, and was welcomed honourably by the king, who held him dear for his valour and showed him great honour.

He was most valiant and handsome; everyone praised Desiré. He could never leave the king except to go to Calatir. At his father's request he went to visit his mother.

It was the beginning of summer, and on the fourth day that he had been home, he got up in the morning and dressed and decked himself out elegantly. He was shod richly, as a knight should be; his shirt and breeches were of silk, whiter than any flower in April, and he was wrapped in a green mantle. He asked for his spurs, and his good horse, for he wanted to mount up to seek his amusement. The horse was large and fine, and he was noble and proper in body, face and demeanour; there was no flaw in him.

He mounted the horse, and was certainly an excellent knight, with handsome legs and handsome feet. He raised himself up in his stirrups and pricked the horse with his spurs, galloping it up and down. He set out without a companion, and headed toward the Blanche Lande. There he saw beautiful flowering trees, and he heard the calls of the birds. His blood was stirred and his mood rose, and he felt great joy in hearing the song. He rode on into the forest. In the thickest part of the woods a holy man had his hermitage. Desiré used to visit him often in his youth and share his food, when he went hunting and passed that way with his father. He decided to go to find him and speak with him.

While he was going toward the Chapel, he looked and saw a maiden, dressed in a very beautiful dress of dark-coloured silk. Her complexion was white and rosy, her figure was fair and full. Her head was bare and her hair flowed loose; she went barefoot to enjoy the dew. She went to a fountain which was under a large tree, carrying two gold basins in her hands.

The knight was not uncourtly: he immediately got off his horse and seized her and wanted to make her his mistress. He laid her down on the fresh grass and I think he would have made her yield, when she begged for mercy: "Knight, go away from here. You will not be more admired if you defile my body. Do me no harm, and let me alone, for the sake of a reward. I am the companion of a damsel—in all the world there is none so fair. I will allow you to see her. If you are up to it, no matter what she says to you do not let her get away from you. For if you are well loved by her, you will not be left in need of anything: you will have plenty of gold and silver all at your command. Do not think that I am lying to you; if all this does not please you, with me you cannot fail: I will do all you please. You may be completely confident in me; I pledge you my faith, I will help you in any need, no matter what it might be."

When Desiré heard her speak, he let her alone. The girl takes him straight to where her young mistress was, in a leafy bower. She was stretched out on a beautiful bed, with a checkered cover on the bed, made from two kinds of costly material, as beautiful as fresh flowers. In front of her sat a maiden. She who had brought Desiré there stood at a distance, and called to him: "Vassal," she said, "look here: in that bower you see what I promised you. Did you ever see so fair a face, such fair hands, such beautiful arms, or such a lovely body so well clothed, lovelier or more delicate hair, more beautifully styled

and braided? Never has one so beautiful been born! Now I have acquitted myself well toward you. Step forward now, and have no fear: in you there is plenty of virtue and valour."

Desiré listened to her, went over there, and tied up his good charger. As soon as the maiden saw him, she didn't wait at all, but fled from the bower and entered the thickest part of the forest. Desiré saw her and went straight after her; he was very fiery and didn't hesitate, so he soon caught up with her. He seized her by her right hand, and he spoke to her gently: "Beautiful one," he said, "speak with me. Why are you fleeing me in such a great rush? I am a knight of this region; I will be your man and your lover. In order to have your love, I will serve you with all my might." The maiden bowed to him and thanked him and said that she would not refuse him or reject his offer: her love was granted and he did with her as with a mistress.

He stayed with her for a long time and left her reluctantly, but she gave him leave and taught and told him how he could find her and where he would be able to talk with her. "Desiré, my love," she said, "you will go to Calatir; I will give you a gold ring, and I will tell you one thing: be on guard against wandering, and be sure to love faithfully. If you misbehave in any way, you will lose the ring at once. And if it so happens that you lose it, you will have lost me forever, and will never get me back or see me. Be sure to behave valiantly now, and don't lose your valour on my account. Before you had my love you were a man of great valour. It is not right for a knight to lose his virtue because of love." She put the ring on his finger, and he kissed her and drew her toward him. Then he mounted his horse and rode back to his lodgings.

He made great expenditures and travelled much; in nothing did he fall short. He gave more away in a month than the king did in half a year. He used to return to the forest to meet his mistress, whom he loved, and they often talked together. They loved each other for so long that she had a son and a daughter, but she didn't tell him and he knew nothing about it.

Once the king sent for him and took him out of the country on important business, for a lengthy campaign. When he had returned, Desiré took his leave of the king; he returned to his district of Calatir, where he was born. When he arrived he rested there during the night, and in the morning he rose early and got on his horse to ride for pleasure, straight to the White Forest, where he used to meet his mistress. He was all alone, I tell you, and he came to the hermitage where lived the holy hermit, whom the knight knew well. He had one thing in mind, that he would talk with the holy man and make his confession to him; he did not know when he would come again.

He opened the gate, went inside and found him in the chapel. "Sir," he said, "I have come here and I want to be confessed and absolved." The hermit granted his request; and he sat down and leaned toward him; then he revealed to him the sins of which he was sure and certain. He confessed to him about his mistress and how he first came to her. The hermit advised him and prescribed penance for him.

When he had been absolved and blessed, he returned to his horse, mounted it by the stirrup and took the reins. He looked at his fingers and hand, but he no longer had the ring; you may be sure that this didn't please him. He realized that he had lost it; never before had he been so devastated. He stayed no longer, but left there and hurried to the place where he thought he would find his mistress, for he wished to speak with her.

He stayed there all day long without seeing her or talking with her. When he couldn't speak to her, he considered himself most wretched: "My beautiful mistress," said Desiré, "where are you? When will you see me? Are you angry with me? I must surely die if I don't see you! You have taken the ring from me; I know that because of you I have lost it. I will never have joy nor comfort! Alas, poor me! What wrong have I done? I love you more than anything. Surely you are not acting well. The hermit gave me confession, but he said nothing bad about you. I begged for mercy for my sins: if I have done anything beyond what is right, beautiful one, do not be angry with me, but assign me my penance. As for what the hermit told me and the fasts he prescribed for me, I will neglect them, if you wish, and I will follow your orders."

He could not beg her for mercy enough that she was willing to talk with him. He became very sad in heart, and he harshly cursed the hermitage and the hermit whom he found there and the mouth with which he spoke and all those who visited him or ever spoke there. When he saw that all this was no use, he had to leave there; he went back to Calatir. He was extremely saddened by the sorrow which oppressed him. In a short time he became very sick. His great joy turned to sadness and his songs turned into tears. He languished for a whole year, and everybody thought he was done for: they all thought he would die, and he thought so himself.

At the end of the year in which he lay ill, hear what happened. One day his squires and his servants left him sleeping; they all went out to amuse themselves and didn't dare to wake him. When he had slept long enough, he awoke and sat up; he was astonished and greatly displeased at one thing: that he had been left alone. While he was in such distress, his mistress came to talk with him. He recognized her and gazed at her: because of the joy which he had from her, he supported himself on the bed with his elbow.

She called to him and said: "Desiré, you are in very bad shape, all distressed and all wasted away. Why, as if on purpose, are you dying? Make some effort, for this is pointless! If I have now hated you for a long time, you certainly deserved it: you made a confession about me! Now you will never recover. Was I such a burden to you? It was not such a great sin: I have never been married or pledged or engaged, and you have never married a wife and have never been betrothed. Now since you sought to confess, I know very well that you wanted to leave me: what good is confession for curing sins until a man is willing to give up them up? Often you have feared that I had enchanted you, but don't be worried about that: I am not that sort of evil creature. When you go to church to hear mass and to pray to God, you will find me standing beside you and taking consecrated bread. You have wandered away from, but because I have loved you

so much, I wish to give you back this much: you will be able to see me every day, to laugh with me and enjoy yourself. Give up your grief: never again will you have any of it, nor will you again seek to confess."

Then the knight answered her: "My beautiful love," he said, "thank you; because you comfort me I am healed and cured. I have never had so much joy in anything." He kissed her; she left at once and he remained, joyous and happy. He was wholly healed and completely happy for the joy which he received and cured from great torment. When he went to pray in church, he saw his mistress standing beside him, eating consecrated bread, bearing the cross and crossing herself; she often spoke with him. He recovered and felt no sickness; he gave and spent as he had done before his mistress hated him.

The king loved him with complete affection, and stayed with him night and day. Once they went hunting, to amuse themselves in the forest, and bows and arrows were brought for them because they wanted to hunt in the forest. Both the king and Desiré stopped under a large tree and both shot at a large stag, but they didn't kill it or wound it. Their arrows fell on the grass near them where they could see them. They felt disappointed that they had missed it; they threw down their bows and unstrung them. They wanted to pick up their arrows where they saw them fall, but they couldn't find them or see them. "God!" said the king to Desiré; "we have been enchanted! Our arrows fell right here before my very eyes, I am sure. Now we can't find them. This is surely a great marvel!"

While they were walking and talking, they saw a young lad before them: he was fair, well-formed and large, and dressed in a tunic made of the finest scarlet. He was extremely handsome and tall. He had beautiful curly hair and an attractive ruddy complexion. He was carrying the arrows in his hand. He was not uncourteous in his words. He first greeted the king and gave him his arrow, then gave Desiré his arrow and spoke to him agreeably: "Sir," he said, "you are my father, and my mother sent me here; she wants me to be with you and become acquainted with my kinsmen. When you first spoke with her in the forest where you engendered me, she gave you a gold ring then; then you lost it, and it grieved you greatly. I have brought it here with me. My lord, Put it on your finger." Desiré recognized the ring at once and took the young man in his arms and hugged him, kissing his eyes and face, his chin a hundred times over. The king and all his companions kissed him at once; they welcomed the lad well and honourably. Desiré told the king where the boy had been conceived. They took him with them and treated him most affectionately. Desiré loved him and held him so dear that he was couldn't leave him night or day.

When the lad had been with him for two months and had learned his lineage, he rose early one day and got dressed and equipped. He mounted his horse, and then he went to meet his father, who had come out of church and was about to mount his horse. "Sir," he said, "listen to me. I have come to take my leave of you; I must go to my mother, for I can no longer stay here."

"No!" said his father. "By God's saints, dear son, do not kill me: truly, I would rather die than see you leave me!"

"Sir," he said, "I must do it." He spurred his horse and set out at a gallop, leaving him behind. Desiré mounted his horse, for he had only just found his son and he feared he had lost him. He called him repeatedly by name, spurred his horse after him, and begged him to stop and talk with him a little. But his son paid no heed and continued straight ahead until he entered the forest.

Desiré pursued him all day long, and when night began to fall, the boy was still going at a gallop, and Desiré rode after him in haste, until his horse crashed into a large tree and fell down. Desiré got to his feet and led his horse along—he had had much trouble and distress that day! Desiré had lost his son and did not know in which direction he had gone. He hadn't gone very far in the forest when he looked to his right and saw a great fire, under a broad, leafy oak. Do you know what Desiré thought when he found the fire? That some powerful man was resting there, who was planning to go hunting in the morning and had been hunting that day but had been overtaken by night. Guided by the light of the fire that he saw, he hurried along in that direction. There he found only a dwarf, tightly clad in silk: he was grinding pepper in a mortar, and was roasting steaks from a large, fat wild boar on the fire.

Desiré came forward and greeted the dwarf pleasantly, but he did not answer. He left the pepper and the mortar, and ran to take the horse. He took it off to one side, then removed the reins and unfastened its saddle, and gave fresh grass to it. Then he went back to the knight and prepared a bed of grass, leaves and ferns and spread an embroidered covering over the bed: he had the knight sit down on it. But he still was not willing to speak to him, and went back to grinding his pepper.

When the pepper was well ground and the meal was ready, he took two basins made of gold in his hands and hung a towel on his neck. As soon as Desiré saw the basins, he recognized them: the maiden was carrying them when he first met her in the forest! He didn't want to give any sign of it to the dwarf. The dwarf laid a tablecloth in front of him, then a salt cellar and knives and then two loaves of bread. In a large cup of pure gold the dwarf brought him wine, and served him the steaks in a silver bowl. Then the knight took a knife and cut a large piece from of meat: he dipped it in the pepper sauce and offered it to the dwarf, who ate it. Then he took the cup and gave it to the dwarf to drink first. He never took a helping without giving one just as good to the dwarf. When the dwarf saw that he was so agreeable, noble and well-bred, he could no longer conceal himself, but wanted to speak.

"Sir Knight," said the dwarf, "truly you are not a fool or uncourtly. You are welcome here. Even if I might be beaten for it, if you please, I will no longer be guarded, but will speak to you. You should be happy, for I was sent to meet you today and to lodge and serve you, because we knew that you would come."

Then the knight answered him: "Friend, great thanks, and may all go well for the one who sent you here and gave me cause to rejoice."

"Sir," said the dwarf, "it was your mistress, who loves you more than her life."

Then Desiré spoke: "My mistress!" he said. "Then I am truly fortunate."

"By my faith, sir, you are telling the truth, for I will do everything in my power so that you may speak with her. If you are willing to go with me, I will lead you to her chamber, and I will show you her bed."

"Friend," said the knight, "I will go with you gladly."

When they rose from their meal, the dwarf led Desiré to the castle where his lady was. They went as far as the bedchamber and found no doors or windows there except one, at the top on the right. Inside they saw candles burning, whose light was very great. In the room were two beds, well and grandly made up; two damsels were lying in them, and I think they were asleep. The dwarf called to Desiré and showed him the whole residence. "Sir," he said, "look here. That is your mistress who is sleeping there, and her sister is on the other side. Go inside, don't be afraid. Over there you will find a serving maid—I know that you are acquainted with her. This girl is sewing a robe for my lady by candle light."

Desiré got ready, and jumped through the window with both feet together, but he couldn't keep his balance and fell down in front of the bed. He hurt his side badly, and all the room echoed with the clatter. The sister of his love awoke; she was very frightened, and cried out. She made all the knights dress quickly and arm themselves. The maid who was awakened—the one who was sewing—took the knight by the hand and led him out, and then spoke: "Sir," she said, "now I am repaying you the debt I owe, just as I promised. If you had been caught in this chamber, I assure you that you would have been killed! Please be so kind as to take care that my service isn't wasted, and if you ever again see me in a situation where you can repay it to me, my lord, don't forget me."

"My dear friend," he said, "I will not."

She accompanied him until they found the dwarf. She struck him in the chest with her hand: "You malicious hypocritical wretch! Why did you betray this noble man? Get away from here as fast as you can!" They went away in great haste and returned to their fire. Desiré was aware that he was hurt and lay down on the bed, feeling that he had been grievously mocked. As soon as light of day appeared, he saddled his horse mounted it. He headed back toward his own region: he was severely wounded in his side, and he remained so for a long time until the king was to hold court at a castle in Calatir. At Pentecost the king invited to the feast all his neighbours and his barons, and nearly all of them came there, since they loved their lord. Desiré, who was loved by the king, was also at this feast.

They all heard mass and left the church; as the king was about to eat, sitting at the dais, an extraordinary lady came riding into the hall on a gentle white mule, and with

her there was a maiden. They were splendidly dressed; their clothes were worth a hundred marks of silver. They were riding two white mules and carrying two sparrowhawks. The king and the men with him looked at them with wonder: they were so extraordinarily beautiful in body, face and figure. With these maidens there was a young man: in all the world there was none so handsome.

They stopped in front of the king, and the oldest greeted the king: "My lord," she said, "listen to me. I have come here to you, and I have brought you these two children. Give arms to the boy make such a arrangements for the girl that you may have honour from them. The truth is that I am their mother and Desiré is their father. You should be pleased to take care of the children of such a good knight and such a lady as I am. I have done you great honour today by coming here to your court from my country."

The king answered: "Beautiful lady, I grant this to you. Whatever you ask of me I will do, with all my power. Dismount, and come and sit down, ask for water, eat and enjoy yourself with us."

"I will certainly not do that," she said. "First, fulfil my request. Marry my lover to me right away, for I wish to take him with me. Let us be joined lawfully, and he will live with me all his life. He will never seek confession or penance or forgiveness."

Then the king had arms brought forth; he wanted to dub the boy a knight. He himself fastened the sword on him and gave him the accolade. Two kings, from Moreis and Leoneis, were at the feast. The king knelt and fastened on his spurs, with great honour. When he was splendidly equipped and knighted, the king, in the presence of all his people, said that he would keep the maiden and make her his queen; he would take her as his own, for he had never seen anyone so beautiful.

Desiré was sitting on the other side; he was very eager that he should marry his mistress and that she should be given at once. Desiré and the king led them both to a church and married them in a double ceremony.

When they returned, the lady took her leave. She wanted to return to her native country; she had no desire to stay there. "Mount up, Desiré," she said. "You will go with me. Your son has now been knighted; leave him here in this land. Your daughter is married; you have had a successful day! You can be certain that they will come to visit when they can." Desiré got on his horse and set out with his mistress, who was his guide. He stayed with her from then on, and never came back; he had never had any desire to return.

To commemorate this adventure, they composed a lai, and called it "Desiré".

Doon

French, early 13th century

"Doon": many people know this lay. There is scarcely any good harpist who doesn't know how to play the melody. But I wish to tell you and recount to you the adventure because of which the Bretons named this lay "Doon." It is my belief, if I recall correctly, that in Edinburgh, which is in the North, there once dwelt a maiden, who was exceptionally courteous and beautiful. She held the land as her inheritance—and there were no other lordships there—and she dwelt in Edinburgh; that was the place that she loved very much. Because of her and because of her damsels, it was called the Castle of the Maidens.

The maiden I am telling you about became proud because of her wealth and power; she disdained all the men of the country. There was not one of such great worth that she would be willing to love him or take him or to cause him to pay court to her: she was not willing to put herself in servitude under the pretext of marriage. All the gentlemen of the land often came to her to beseech her: they wanted her to take a lord, but she refused them completely. She would never take a lord, she said, unless he would do so much for her love that he would be willing to travel in a single day from Southampton, which is by the sea, right to the place where she was: she told them that she would take that man; in this way she thought to free herself; and these men left her alone: but it could not remain like that.

When the men of the country heard this—I'll tell you the truth about it—many of them put themselves to the test along the roads they were supposed to travel. They quickly mounted large horses that were strong and good for travelling, because they didn't want to be slowed down. Most of them could not endure it or complete the day's journey. There were some of them who arrived successfully, but they were tired and exhausted. When they had dismounted and had come up to the castle, the maiden would come up to meet them, and would honour them greatly; then she would have them taken, alone, into her chambers to rest. She would have beds made up for them, to kill them and entrap them, with fine coverlets and bedclothes. Those who were worn out and tired went to bed, and fell asleep: sleeping in the soft bed, they would die. The chamberlains would find them dead and would report it to their lady; she was extremely happy about it, because she was revenged on them.

The story was carried far and wide about this haughty damsel. In Brittany across the sea, a knight heard tell of it who was hardy and valiant, wise, courteous and venturesome. This vassal's name was Doon. This man had a good horse, named Bayard, which was very swift; he wouldn't exchange it for two castles. Because of his confidence in this steed, he would be willing to undertake this task, for the maiden and for the land, to find out if he would be able to win her. As soon as he could, he crossed the sea, and

arrived in Southampton. He sent to the damsel and informed her by his messenger that he had arrived in the country, and that she should send her representatives to him who would tell her the truth, on the day which he had named to them . . . (*a line is missing*) When she saw his messengers she sent willingly to him; she named and set the day when he would come into her country.

It was a Saturday morning when Doon set out on the road. He travelled so much that by evening he had completed his day's journey and had come to Edinburgh; he was welcomed with great joy. There wasn't one of the knights and servants, great or small, who didn't honour him and serve him and treat him very well. When he had spoken to the maiden, they took him into a chamber to rest when it was pleasing to him. The knight ordered them to find dry firewood for him and to bring it into the chamber and then to leave him to rest, for he was exhausted from the journey. They did what he desired. He shut the door and closed himself in; he did want any of them to spy on him. He made a fire with a flint, approached the fire, and warmed himself. He never lay down, all night long, in the bed which was prepared. For if a tired and exhausted man wanted to lie in that good bed, misfortune could soon befall him from it. He who lies more uncomfortably regrets it less and is restored more quickly.

In the morning, when day broke, he went to the door and opened it, lay down in the bed, covered himself, and, as it felt good to him, he fell asleep. Those who were supposed to guard the room thought that they would find him dead; but they saw that he was completely content, and, among themselves, they are pleased and happy. At the first hour of the day he arose, and dressed and wrapped himself up. He went to talk to the maiden and to ask for what had been promised. The maiden replied to him: "My friend, it cannot be like that; it will be necessary for you to exercise your body and your horse some more. In one day, you must travel as much as a swan is able to fly: then I will take you, without contradiction."

He asked for a postponement until Bayard had recovered and he himself had rested: the time was set for the fourth day. Doon set out on his journey. Bayard travels, the swan flies; it's a marvel that he doesn't injure it. The swan could not fly as well as Bayard could travel. That night they came to a place, to a castle which was splendid. He was well lodged there and his horse was well cared for. He stayed there as long as he pleased, and, when he wanted to, he left and went to Edinburgh and asked for what had been promised. She could not put him off any longer; she summoned all her barons. On their advice, she took Doon and made him lord of her country.

When he had married the maiden, he held court, both large and beautiful, for three days. On the fourth, he arose in the morning, his horse was brought to him, and he commended his wife to God, for he wants to return to his own country. The lady cries and shows great grief because her lover is going away. She begs for mercy from him, sweetly, but that doesn't do her any good. She cries to him please, to remain, and tells him that he is betraying her.

He is unwilling to hear her at all, for he's eager to leave. "Lady," he says, "I will go away. I don't know if I will find you again. You are pregnant by me, and I believe that you will have a son. You will keep my golden ring for him: when he is big, you will give it to him, and order him to guard it well. By the ring, he will be able to find me. Send him to the King of France: let him be fostered and educated there." He offers the ring; she takes it; he leaves at once, and waits no longer; he has gone away, and remains no more. She is very sad, and laments greatly; she was pregnant, it is true.

At the time when her son was born, her friends were very joyful about it. She guarded him and cherished him until the boy could ride a horse and go out fishing and hunting in the woods. She gave his father's ring to him and ordered him to guard it. The lad was outfitted and sent to the King of France; he took plenty of gold and silver and spent it most lavishly. He made himself popular at court because he was generous in giving; he was a very accomplished man. He was in France for such a long time that the King made a knight of him, and he travelled to tournaments, seeking renown both far and wide. He never heard of any task without wanting to be there first; he was very popular with the knights. He was an exceedingly worthy man; there was no man so valiant in the country. He had a great company of knights.

The lad went to Mont Saint Michel in Brittany tourney; he wanted to get to know the Bretons. However much he jousted, there wasn't a single man that he didn't defeat by his skill. His father was on the other side. He was extremely impatient to joust with the lad; lance raised, he entered the lists: he expected something good from him. The two of them rode at great speed, and great strokes were struck; the son knocked down the father: if he had known that it was his father, it would have grieved him that he did so. But he didn't know that it was, and Doon did not recognize him; he wounded him grievously in the arm.

When the tournament was breaking up, Doon sent for the lad to come to him to talk, and he came there without delay, and Doon began to speak to him. "Who are you, dear friend," he said, "who knocked me off my horse?" The young lad replied, "Sir, I really don't know how it happened: those who were there know." Doon heard him, and called to him "Show me your hands," he said, "quickly!" The lad was no common man; he takes off his gloves quickly, shows and extends his two hands to him. When he saw the young lord's hands, on his finger he recognized the ring which he had given to his wife; his heart was very joyous and happy. By the ring which he had seen he had surely recognized his son, knew that he was his own son, whom he engendered.

In everyone's hearing, he said to him: "Lad, I recognized well when you jousted with me today that you were of my lineage; there is great chivalry in you. Never before because of a knight's stroke have I ever fallen from my horse, nor will any other ever knock me down nor give me such a powerful stroke. Come kiss me, I am your father. Your mother is very proud; I won her at the cost of great effort. When I had taken her,

I went away and I have never seen her since. I entrusted this gold ring to her and said that she should give it to you when she sent you to France."

"Sir," he said "that is true." They kissed and embraced each other and felt great joy. They went together to a lodging-house. They left for England; the son took the father to his mother, who loved him greatly and desired him strongly. She received him as her lord; then they lived in great honour.

Of him and of his good steed, and of his son, whom he held most dear, and of the day's journeys he travelled for the lady whom he loved, the Bretons made the melody of the lay that is called "Doon."

"Nicholas and the Bourgeoise"

from *Miracles of the Virgin*

French, Early 13th Century

Most wretched is the man who cannot hear at all; so too the man who throws himself into sin: the man who cannot hear understands nothing, and the man who devotes himself to sin does not love the one who chastises him, as long as he remains in his folly. The fool thinks he is extremely wise, his heart is so hard and inconstant. Neither the deaf man nor the sinner has any love for the preacher; for the deaf man doesn't understand him at all, and the sinner—so he boasts—pays no attention to the words because he has no interest in leaving the lechery and sin which has infected his heart and body: he has nothing but scorn for discipline. And so the wise Solomon says, "The fool flies from discipline, but the wise man instructs himself in discipline, in penitence." Discipline has such great power that sin is completely forgotten in the body which is disciplined.

I wish to tell you an example of this; no one ought to contradict me about it, for I have good witnesses to it. Master Nicholas of Tournai who was a canon of Paris, of holy life and great virtue, and a master of divinity, greatly honoured in the city, used to go willingly to church, for it was his way to act righteously. The townswomen, in those days, still went willingly to Notre Dame. There are still some who, like them, go there willingly: if a woman has prospered, she will show off her tresses and her naked breast. In my opinion, a woman who decks herself out foolishly ought to be tonsured.

But let me return to my story, of a pretty lady who came to know the master. She would willingly stand right by the door through which the canon entered, for he was handsome, courteous and wise. This lady used to stand in his way, and often greeted him, and the master would reply to her sweetly and prudently, not meaning anything improper by it. The townswoman, who believed that he desired her greatly but didn't dare speak to her, sent an old woman to him, who took him greetings on her behalf. "And may God save her," he replied. Then the old woman went back to tell the townswoman what the master had said.

The lady asked the old woman to go back to him and say, "My lord, I have come here with greetings from the townswoman; you are often in her thoughts. She would be glad to be with you, all alone in a room, if you please, my dear sir. My lady is beautiful, wealthy and wise, of good renown and from a great family."

The master said, "Go back there now, courteously and prudently. Let the lady come to my room. I will wait until she comes there, for I want to further her best interests."

She did not wait any longer, but went right away. She told his reply to the lady, and as soon as she was ready the lady set out, for she has heard what she desired. She

continued until she went into the house, and asked for the master's room. The servants pointed it out, and the two of them went upstairs together; the old woman led the way, and entered the room. She saw the master, and greeted him: "My lord, here is my lady, who loves you so much."

Then the lady stepped forward and the old woman went out, giving them the opportunity to do evil. The lady greeted the master; he asks her about her situation and why she came there. The lady told him everything: that she had given her love to him, more than to any other man or creature, and that she was of her own free will surrendering both her body and her will to him to do with them completely as he wished.

"You love me very much, my lady, I do not doubt it," said the master. So take off your mantle and show me how pretty you are." At once she was unwrapped: she dropped the mantle, of delicate fur, behind her.

"Lady," said the master, "please remove your surcoat." This was pleasing to her: at once she removed the surcoat. She stood there, beautiful and attractive, wrapped in rich cloth.

"Lady, now take off your blouse and your petticoat." She did all this for him without hesitation. The Lady was left naked in her slip, straight, white and delicate, undressed, with her hair spread over her shoulders.

The master, who was deceiving her, took a whip that he kept for disciplining himself. He gets up and comes at the Lady: "I will help you to save your soul," he says. Then he beats and strikes until the whole room resounds. She cries and sighs from the heart, begs for mercy, dares say no more. He strikes her high and low until blood runs down and her slip is reddened by it. Then he put the whip down and slowly and carefully made the lady put on her clothes. He sat her down next to him, and gave her a fine short sermon: "My lady," he says "discipline sends foolish thoughts out of the body. I believe that henceforth you'll have nothing to do with this business that had you all overheated when you were brought here. If you and I had touched each other sinfully, we would have been beaten harshly: a single spark of the torment of the fire of Purgatory burns hotter—I tell the truth—and the body that it burns suffers more torment than three or four days of beating such as you have had, no matter how well the man knew how to beat. And it is known for certain, without doubt, that one mortal sin results in seven years of penitence. We would have been dead and destroyed if we had known each other carnally."

And so he finished his sermon to her. She covered her head and went away, her slip clinging to her sides; the old woman went along with her. The townswomen corrected herself, and loved the good man so much that afterwards she lived according to his advice and gave up all wickedness. She came to his sermons, and tried to do well. She received discipline well, and the devil never again deceived her, for she was taken with discipline, good counsel, and doctrine.

Ignaurés

RENAUT

French, 13th century

One who loves should never conceal it, but rather should utter some fine words from which others may learn and receive a good example. I may benefit and have honour from it, but I won't get rich from it! Sense and wisdom, gold and silver—people no longer understand such things. Gifts are now taken and put away, and no one will get any recompense any more. Wisdom which is covered up is lost: but that which is shown and revealed can take root and grow everywhere.

And so I would like to begin a romance and tell of a very strange adventure which happened long ago in Brittany, to a knight of great power who surely ought to be remembered. This knight's name was Ignaurés, and he was very illustrious. He was born in the land of Hoel at the noble castle of Riol. His rank was not very high, but he achieved so much by his prowess that no knight in all the land was as worthy. There never will be a more joyful man. At the very beginning of May, he would rise at dawn, taking along five jongleurs, flute players, and pipers. Out to the woods this young man would go, welcoming May with great clamour! He was very fond of such enjoyment, and took part in it every day. True love had possessed and inflamed him: the ladies called him "Charming Lousignol."

Twelve peers assigned to the court dwelt in the castle at Riol. They were bold and prudent knights, well-provided with lands and income, and each one had a lovely, noble wife of high lineage and from a great family. Ignaurés, who had a noble heart, came to know all twelve; each one promised him all her love, just as he pleased, saying that if he wished anything of her, he would be treated like a count. Each one thought he was hers, and so they were all happy and amiable. Ignaurés acquitted himself very well: when he visited one of them, he forgot all the others and gave no sign that he desired anyone else. He led a very courtly life. When tournaments were held, he went to seek fame, along with twenty or even thirty knights. Yet he had very little income: everyone was astonished, but the ladies gave so much to him, for they were filled with delight. Ignaurés was quite a young man!

He loved them all for more than a year, until one Saint John's Day—a feast which delights all living creatures—it happened that all twelve of the noble ladies went out to relax in a orchard. No one was there except those twelve. One of them was very eager to say what she was thinking (and damn whoever tried to restrain her from what she wanted to say!).

"You know, there is something that I could say, and I'm sure you will grant it when you hear the reason."

"Say whatever you want, for we will all permit you."

"We ladies are happy, lovely, noble, and worthy, the wives of the peers of this castle: and we are very happy. All of us are in love, and this is an especially joyful day. Let us make one of us our priest. Let her go and sit here in the middle by this flowering tree. Then each of us must go and tell her whom she loves, as if in confession, and to whom she has given the gift. In this way, we will know surely which of us loves most nobly."

All of them replied, "That's well said. We agree without contradiction. You yourself will be the priest and hear the confessions. Go sit down beside that tree."

"I agree," the gentle lady said.

One of them, clothed in a rich tunic and a grey mantle, rose, came to the priest, and laughed.

"What do you seek?" the master said.

"I come to confess, Sir Priest."

"Then sit down and tell me—and be careful that you don't lie—what is the name of your lover?"

"He is the most illustrious knight in this whole empire. Do you know who I mean? The most handsome man that you know, Ignaurés, the bold, the wise—he's the one to whom I've given myself."

The priest blushed when she heard the woman name her lover (she herself was the one who loved him best). She could barely control herself: "Lady, now let the others come. I have heard your affirmation."

Another then came up, beating her breast with her right hand.

"Go easy on your spine, sweet sister! Who made you commit the sins with which your body is stained?"

"Sir, I have come for correction."

"I order you in penitence to tell me your lover's name, dear friend."

"Certainly, I will not lie. I can name to you the most courtly man from here to Vermandois, the prettiest and the most well bred."

"You value him very highly! I do not know if you have the evidence."

"By my faith! You are mistaken! His name is Ignaurés, the noble."

The priest's blood was stirred when she heard her mentioned the man she thought she held in pledge. "Lady, go and sit down over there."

A beautiful, worthy and joyful lady came forward. "Sit down, wise lady." When she had made her sit, she ordered her to reveal the name of her lover, insisting that she tell the truth.

"He is the noblest of men, the most courtly, the most dutiful, without any trace of dishonour. You will know the name of the one to whom I have completely given myself. He really ought to be a king or a count. I can name him, for he is the best of men: Ignaurés, the flower of nobility."

When the priest heard her, she crossed herself, and her face grew pale. "Lady, now go back and sit down. You have a handsome and noble lover."

Another lady stepped forth courteously, dressed regally in silk from Constantinople. She had a ring on her finger. When she heard a bird warbling in the tree, she kissed and fondled the ring. "Lady," said the priest, "sit down. I believe you don't hate the one whose ring that was!"

She replied, "He should be a count!"

"Then name him, since he is so noble."

"It is Ignaurés, the flower of nobility."

When she heard this, she almost went out of her mind: her face turned fiery red. "Now lady, go back and sit down."

Then another pretty lady came forward; she was polished and beautiful. "Tell me, lady, what is the name of the one who has the gift of your heart?"

"The land resounds with his name. People ought to call it out when it thunders, so lightning will not strike them."

"You're wrong," said the priest. "You've said his name often enough, but that didn't prevent a certain bolt from striking you! His name will never save you or deflect such lightning bolts."

"May God bring blows like that back to me! I won't complain of their great number."

"Lady, let's drop this matter; tell me his name, sweet sister."

"Ignaurés, the man with the noble heart, before whom all Brittany trembles."

The priest smiled in spite of herself, marvelling at this man that each of the ladies named. None of them mentioned anyone else!

When they had all confessed, they gathered before the priest: "Lady, tell us now, who do you think has the most valiant lover?"

"To tell the truth, each of you has told me the name the same knight! He has dishonoured us all! For I love him also, just as all of you do! By God! This is an evil deed! Ignaurés has taken on a case that will cost him dearly, without delay!"

"How can we take vengeance for it?"

"We will all agree that the first woman he visits will grant him a meeting with her—and with all of us!—in the orchard, without delay. We will make the day known, and we will all be there, without fail. Everyone should bring a sharp knife! Cruel vengeance will be taken for his mad and wicked audacity against us."

They all agreed to this plan, and then they left the garden and went their ways. Every one of them felt pain in her heart.

Ignaurés, who knew nothing of this plot, went to visit one of them. He kissed and embraced her, but he couldn't go all the way. "Lady, why are you so cold toward me?"

"Sir, I am not cold at all. Right now you are pressuring me, but I want you to promise that you will come and speak with me on Sunday, in my lady Climenche's garden; there you can do what you desire."

"Lady," he said, "at your pleasure. I will follow your commands." He quickly took his leave. The noble knight was doomed to die, unless he caught on, or good fortune prevented him from returning!

This lady had the others warned, and on the next Sunday they all hid in the orchard, with good knives concealed under their mantles. The one who had arranged the treachery came into the orchard. Ignaurés saw his mistress. He had come by another path, accompanied by a servant, who carried all the messages for him and looked after his finances. The lady had left the gate open, and the brave man went straight in. Before he left again, he would suffer!

The lady came to meet him, and he sent his messenger back to his lodgings: he didn't care to have him watch! She closed and locked the gate; softly and quietly, they went and sat down under a tree. The lady embraced the young man and he gently kissed her. She didn't want to allow him any other pleasure, for her desire was rather weak.

The ladies who had loved the handsome, happy knight rushed out from all sides, inflamed with anger and rage.

"My lady," he said, "is this a trap? You've caught me in your ambush!"

They went to where he was sitting and surrounded him. Ignaurés spoke to them and said, "Welcome!"

"But you," they said, "are ill come. It is only right for you to pay for your outrages! Before you leave this place you will get the reward of a false and disloyal traitor!"

The priestess spoke first: "Please, I beg you, allow me to speak my mind; then each of you can say what she wants. Ignaurés, do not lie to me. For many a day I have been your love. I gave my heart to you."

"Lady, I am you lover, your man, and your knight, with all my heart and soul."

One of them rose disdainfully and spoke to him proudly: "Ignaurés, you are a faithless lover! What? Aren't you *my* lover?"

"Yes lady, so help me God! My heart and my love have never failed you, and I will never fail you, as long as I live."

Another one was envious and looked at him cruelly: "Ah! Evil traitor! You don't say this to me! So, do you love someone other than me? You were supposed to be all mine, on your oath!"

"Lady, I love you, truly, and will always love you: it can't be denied!"

"What?" said another. "What are you saying? Didn't you promise to love me?"

"Yes, with all my strength, you and all the others. I love you all, have no doubt. I love their solace and their delight."

Then you could have heard a great clamour, women fighting and quarrelling, menacing the good vassal. They drew the knives which they had hidden. "Ignaurés, you have sinned so much that you are surely dead, and no one but God can save you!"

"Ladies, don't be so cruel as to commit such a great sin! Even if I had my helmet laced on and I were riding an Arabian steed, with a shield at my neck and a lance in my

hand, I would dismount here and throw myself on your mercy. If I die at such lovely hands, I will be a martyr, with the saints! Now I know I was blessed at my birth."

When they heard him, each one wept. The knight's fine speech had softened them completely. The lady had heard the confessions said, "Ladies, if you please, let us agree that you will do my bidding."

"We grant you this, since it pleases you."

"Ignaurés, you deceived us well until we discovered it. We will not love you like this any more; it is our considered decision that the lady who pleases you most should be yours and remain so. Every woman wants to have her own lover."

"I wouldn't do that, not for anything! I will still love you all, just as I have done up to now."

"Obey my command," said the priest, "or, by my head, you will die now! Choose the one of us you want."

"Lady," he said, "it is you. I am saddened by my loss, for they are all very worthy; but your love is dear to me."

"Thank you very much," the gentle lady said. The others were very unhappy, but nevertheless they swore that they would not love him any more and would leave him in peace. When they had settled their affairs, each one went to her lodgings again, and Ignaurés returned to the town.

Now you must know that Ignaurés had to visit his mistress often: if he had still had all of them, he wouldn't have done so, but now he had only one path. He visited her often, no matter who saw him, and by going too often he was discovered and destroyed: the mouse that has only one hole doesn't last very long! I don't know how it happened, but what the foolish women had confessed to each other when they were sitting in the orchard became known. There was a cruel and talkative slanderer in the castle. This woman, who was foolishly trying to cover her tracks often went there, and this slanderer eventually discovered what she was doing. Once he knew, it wasn't kept hidden.

One day the twelve peers all came to eat together. It seems this wretch went there, and before he leaves the house, he will tell a story to anger even the noblest among them! The traitor began to speak, laughed, and made the sign of the cross on his forehead.

"What are you laughing at, knave? This is a poor beginning! I know what you're up to. You're preparing some slander!"

"By my faith," he said, "I see something so marvellous that I can hardly tell you. I can't keep from laughing."

"May God help you! Is it something about us?"

"Yes, by God. It's about all of you."

"Tell the truth. We're ready."

"I will, if I get something worthwhile from it!"

"You'll get something, don't be afraid."

"If I could have some formal assurance, I would tell you, by Saint Germain!"

One of them said, "I will undertake it, and see that you get what you want."

"Lords, if I tell you the truth about an affair—and I am absolutely certain about it—will you do me no harm or injury?"

"Not at all. We won't say a word against you."

"You have all been cuckolded, by a single man! I swear to it, as surely as I see you here. But one of you is the greatest cuckold of all."

When they heard this, they shook with rage at this vile reproach. "Is he a townsman or a knight? Tell us his name!"

"It's been well hidden. The name of the vassal who has been acting so improperly is Ignaurés." He told them the whole adventure of the orchard and the confessions and how the infuriated women wanted to carve him up with their knives. "Then the young man was terrified, because he was very close to death. They asked him to choose the one who pleased him best, and she remained alone with him while the others went away. They would never love him again. Whether he wanted to or not, that's what happened. He chose one of your wives, the most beautiful and the wisest; and I know which one of you is her master."

"Whose wife is it? Do you know?"

He said to one of them, "It's yours!"

The man replied, infuriated, "By God! Since I am her lord, I must be much more worthy than the rest of you!"

When the meal was over he swore to them that he wouldn't tell anyone else about this affair. They gave him his reward at once and he took his leave. The others remained, and lamented over their shame to each other. "There will be trouble in this castle if we can't avenge ourselves: we're sorry wretches indeed."

"I agree," said one. If you will follow my scheme we will have full vengeance for it. There will be no point in setting spies, since he has abandoned them all except the one he visits often. If her husband will agree with us to watch where he goes, he could easily catch him."

"That's well said," they all agreed. The husband, trembling with rage, said he certainly would watch for him. "And then, sir, let us know when you have captured him. We will all come and avenge ourselves of our shame." They all agreed to this plot.

They returned to their lodgings, anxious to punish Ignaurés, who had no idea he would have to answer a charge. Full of happiness, he was enjoying himself in the castle, right in front of his mortal enemies. The man whose wife he loved spied on him day and night, to trap him. If he could surprise him with his wife, he would keep his pledge to all the others!

Ignaurés went too often to enjoy himself with his mistress: but the mouse that has only one hole is soon trapped and caught. He was surprised one morning lying with the lady. The lord who was master of them all discovered it through his spy. He knew all

the layout of his house, and entered the stone-walled chamber through an underground vault, with his helmet laced on and his sword drawn. He found Ignaurés, who was not on guard, making love. "Aha!" he said. "You should not be here!"

"My lord," answered Ignaurés, "for God's sake, mercy! You see how things are. I have sinned grievously against you. There's no point in denying or hiding it."

The lord had two young gentlemen with him, who were his nephews. They wanted to cut Ignaurés up, but the lord told them not to, but said they would have a better revenge. "You will not kill him, by my soul!"

Then the lord called to his wife: "Lady, you must bathe our lover here, and then you will have him bled. Be sure your lord has white sheets!" The lady tore her hair, filled with great sorrow.

Then the lord led Ignaurés away and had him secretly guarded in a stone-floored chamber by people in whom he felt most confidence. He promised to bring him pain and shame: his dinner will be poor indeed! Then he had the other peers informed of what he had accomplished.

The lady was in great torment; and she had the other ladies informed of all that had befallen her and how she had been surprised with Ignaurés: "I don't even know if he is dead or alive! Each one of you had what she wanted from him: now help me to make my lament. Just as we all had joy together, let our grief be shared as well." They all promised the messenger that they would never eat again until they could find out for sure if he were alive or dead. Then they began to fast.

Meanwhile the lord gathered all of his companions secretly. They took counsel to decide what sentence they could impose on the man who had caused them such shame and dishonour. One said, "Those filthy sluts have all agreed to fast until such time as they know whether he will die or escape. In four days, let us remove from the vassal that vile member whose delights used to please them: let it be made into a meal, and we'll put his heart in too! We'll prepare twelve bowls and trick them into eating it. There is no better way to avenge ourselves."

They all agreed to this plan, and dismembered the good knight. As they had agreed, they prepared the food and divided it among the twelve fasting ladies. Each of them was eased in her heart when she had swallowed that fine sweet food! Their lords had wheedled and pleaded with them enough to make them eat and drink, and they did not disdain it. When their spirits had revived, each one begged her husband to tell her truly, for the love of God, if he was free from prison.

The one who had caught him in his house replied, "Lady priestess, you were his mistress. You have eaten your great desire, that which gave you such pleasure; for you wanted nothing else. Finally you have been well served! I killed, I destroyed your lover, and you have all shared in the delight of that thing for which a woman hungers most. Are you satisfied now, the twelve of you? Now we're well avenged for our shame!"

The lady immediately fainted, and on reviving, sighed and wept. She hated death, because it did not come; she cared for nothing that she saw. She sent word to her companions, informing them about the meal: she told them all about the food which they had boldly eaten. They all made a vow to God that they would never eat again, no matter what fine dishes they were offered. So they spoke, and they fulfilled it well.

As long as they lived, they all lamented. One lamented his beauty, his handsome, well-formed members, and how they were destroyed, even that loveliest one! Thus they spoke of the young man. Another lamented his great courage, his noble body, and his generosity. The fourth lamented his flanks and his grey-green, laughing eyes. Another lamented his sweet heart. There would never be another one of such worth. "Alas! How we have changed you! The jealous men took vengeance too cruelly! But we will not eat; in this way we will avenge ourselves." Another lamented his fine feet which sat so nicely in his stirrups. He was more skilled at hunting with hounds and hawks than anyone—and so full of delight. Each one lamented the loss of her pleasure: who was as gratifying as he? Everyone who heard their laments wept for them. These gentle ladies would not eat, neither for the sake of their friends or their kinsfolk. They could not forget their lover. They grew weak, they wrung their hands, they sighed, they cried and they lamented.

The twelve of them mourned together; and twelve verses has this lay, which should be remembered, for the story is completely true. Renaut is a witness that Ignaurés, the good vassal, died. Those who were his mistresses died for love of him. May God have mercy on their souls, both on the ladies and the knights.

And blessed be the lady who caused it to be composed, this lay which should please lovers. She has bound me so tightly that I can never be released. She has a long, full white neck with no bone or wrinkle to be seen. She is simple and polished and whiter than new-fallen snow. You will not have any more explicit words about her; the rest of her body is covered up, and love's chain is all the better for that! But I don't think I am one who can say the truth about it, although from the outside I do see her little breasts raise up her tunic from underneath, making it jut out ever so slightly, for they seem to be quite firm. She has lovely shoulders, long hands and slender fingers, lovely arms in her sleeves. She is a little wider in the hips and slim of waist. She carries herself well, and is neither too small nor too large. Her appearance suits her marvellously well. She is love's chain itself! You should know that by this chain the lady can lead me wherever she wants. I am in a sweet prison and have no desire to escape through ransom.

That is the story of the lay, and now I will bring it to a close for you here. Frenchmen, Poitevins, and Bretons call it "The Lay of the Prisoner." It was composed for Ignaurés, who was dismembered for love.

The Lady Castrated

French, 13th Century

My lords, you who have wives and raise them up too high above yourselves and allow them to lord it over you, you do nothing but dishonour yourselves. Hear now a short cautionary tale, which is written here for you: you will certainly learn from it that you shouldn't do everything your wives desire—they won't hold you any less dear for it. You ought to chastise the foolish ones and have them taught not to be haughty toward their husbands or lord it over them, but cherish and love them, obey and honour them: if they don't, then shame on them! Today I'll show in my story, in the tale I am to tell, that those who give power to their wives should take heed and learn that by doing so they earn dishonour. What I say about it, you may be sure, is not a joke, but the truth!

Once there was a gentleman who was very wealthy. He was a knight, and held a large fief, but he loved his spouse so much that he had raised her above himself. He had abandoned the lordship of his land and house, turning everything over to her. The lady therefore considered him so base and so low that whatever he said she would contradict, and would undo whatever he had done.

They had a very beautiful daughter. The report of her beauty travelled far and wide, and she became so renowned that a Count heard all about her. He immediately fell in love with her, although he had never seen her. Still, he loved her, as it often happens: some people love because of hearing praise, without seeing, and it seems good. The Count did not have a wife; he was young and very prudent, and was full of great wisdom which was more useful to him than any possessions. He wanted very much to see the girl they were talking about, and to learn whether they were telling the truth or lying. Finally he saw her, and now you'll hear how.

The Count went out to hunt one day, taking with him three knights and some huntsmen to look after the dogs. They hunted in the forest all day, until it was late afternoon and a storm arose, with loud thunder, lighting, and a great deal of rain. The Count's people were scattered and lost, except for the four knights who managed to keep together. The sun was beginning to set, and the Count said, "What is the plan? I don't know what we can do. We can't make it as far as any of the houses. The sun is beginning to set, and I don't know where our people are, but I think they're long gone. We'll have to find some shelter, but I don't know where or with whom."

While the Count was debating, the path led them to a garden by a pond near the house of the knight with the beautiful daughter. So they rode up there. It had rained that day, quite unpleasant weather. They dismount there by an elm tree; the good man who owned the house was sitting on a stone block. Now the Count greets him cordially, and he returns the greeting politely, and then stands up. The Count asked him for lodging.

"My lord," says the knight, "I would be glad to shelter you—for you need some rest—but I don't dare give you lodging."

"You don't dare? Why not?"

"Because of my wife, who will not consent to anything I do or say. She has lordship over me, control over all my household, power over everything. She doesn't care if it upsets me. I'm nothing more than a raincoat to her. She does what she wants, nothing for me, and won't do anything that I command."

The Count laughed, and said to him: "If you were bold, she wouldn't do that!"

"My lord," he replied, "she has learned how, and she will want to continue forever, unless God has mercy on me. But still, if you'll just wait here a little while, I'll go down there and you follow after me. Ask me for lodging, but rudely; and I will refuse. If she hears that, I'm certain that you will be well sheltered, just because I have rejected you."

They stayed behind, and he went on; when he was inside, they followed him. The Count says: "God save the lord of the house! May He give honour both to you and to us!"

"My lord Count, may God bless both you and your companions!"

Then the Count spoke to him again: "My lord, we need a place to stay, so give us lodging."

"I won't do it."

"But why, my lord?"

"I don't want to."

"As you're a man of good will, you'll do it."

"Truly, I won't, not for anything."

"For payment, or out of friendship, let us stay here, just until tomorrow."

"I won't, not for anything, not for love or for your entreaties!"

The lady hears this, and jumps forward; she'll carry out her own plans. "Welcome, my lord Count! You will be received here joyfully; dismount at once." They dismounted, and the servants attended to them, as the lady had commanded.

The lord says: "I forbid them to eat my fish, my good venison, my old wines, my birds or my pastries!"

The lady says: "Now make yourselves comfortable. Don't be upset by anything he says; it seems my husband is a little grumpy today." The Count is very pleased with this service, for the lady is very attentive. She takes great pains to serve them. Even the horses get plenty of oats, just because the lord dared to refuse it to them.

The lady hurried up the dinner: she had plenty of venison and poultry prepared. She has hidden her daughter in her room, for she doesn't want the Count to see her; but her husband wants it, so he says: "My lady, let my daughter eat with your people in that chamber, not out here. She is so pretty and has such a fine body. The Count is young: if he sees her, he might quickly desire such a flower."

The lady says: "She'll come out now to eat with us, and he will see her." The lady dresses her very prettily; she was attractive, and had a fine complexion. She leads her out, the Count takes her by the hand, and seats her next to himself. Her beauty had been greatly praised to him, but he found it even greater. It was his opinion that she was very beautiful. Love struck him in the breast, and made him love her so much that he wanted to have her as his mate. Then they washed and sat down; the Count, who has been surprised by love, eats with the pretty girl. The cuisine was excellent, they drank many wines and liqueurs, and the Count was greatly honoured. After dinner, they relaxed and chatted, and then ate some fruit. They washed after the meal, for squires had brought the water in, and then they drank some vintage wine.

Then, the Count spoke, saying, "My lord, I ask you for your beautiful daughter as my wife. My eyes have never seen a more beautiful girl, so give her to me; I want her."

The father said: "I won't do it, for I want to marry her off to someone of lower station, and I will do so!"

The lady hears that, and leaps to her feet: "My lord," she says, "you'll have her, and never have to care about him! It's not up to him to marry her off. I grant her to you, and along with her I have plenty of gold and silver and rich clothing to give. I give her to you: now, take her!"

The Count replies: "Thank you! I love her so much that I want to have her for her beauty, not for a dowry: having her is enough!" Then the beds were made, and the three of them go to bed, and sleep.

Love torments the Count. He slept a bit, but he was awake for longer; love advised him what to do. In the morning when they rose, they went at once to the church, taking the maiden with them. The Count honoured her with money; the lady offers him great wealth, clothing, money but the Count says that he has enough wealth, and they should keep their own. He says, truly, "He who takes a good wife has much, he who takes a wicked one takes nothing."

The father said: "Listen daughter, if you wish to have honour, fear your husband the Count; if you don't, it will mean your shame!"

The mother said: "Speak with me, dear daughter, I insist."

"Gladly, mother," says the girl.

She whispers her commands in her ear: "Dear daughter, keep your courage up; be proud toward your husband. Take a lesson from your mother who always contradicts your father. Nothing that he says, commands or forbids is ever taken seriously. If you want to have honour, deny your husband this same way; push him back, push yourself forward, and do little of what he commands. If you act like that, you will be my daughter, but if you don't, you'll pay for it dearly!"

"I will do it," she says, "if I can, if I find it possible with my lord."

The father can't take it any longer, but goes to beseech his daughter. "My dear daughter," says the father, "don't believe your mother's words. Believe me, I pray you,

if you wish to have honour, and fear your husband the Count, so that no one will speak shamefully about you. Always be in agreement with him: if you don't, you will be wrong, and you will be blamed by everyone."

The Count didn't want to stay, but preferred to be on his way, and the lord spoke to him: "My lord Count," said the rich man, I have made you a gift of my daughter; out of friendship, my lord Count, take this good palfrey and these two fine greyhounds, which are bold and hardy and swift."

The Count takes them, thanks him for them, takes his leave, and leads his wife away. As he travels, the Count wonders what arts and methods he might use to make his wife be true to him, so that she might not take after her mother who was so proud and haughty.

Then they enter a field, and, in the meadow ahead, a rabbit jumps up. The Count says: "Now, my hounds, after it! Since you are so bold and swift, I order you, by your heads, to catch that rabbit at once, or else you will lose your heads on the spot!" The greyhounds rush after it, but they can't keep up with it; they came back, and the lord cut off their heads with his sharp sword.

Then he spoke to his sorrel mare, saying, "Don't neigh again!" The palfrey didn't understand him; soon after, it neighed again. The Count dismounted, and cut off its head; then he mounted another horse.

"My lord," said the lady to the Count, "you should have valued those hounds and that palfrey more, for my father's sake, if not for mine. You have killed them, and I don't know why."

The Count says: "Just because they disobeyed my orders."

The Count travels on, leading his wife and thinking up more tricks; he comes to his chief city. There, the barons and vavassors were assembled, very concerned about their lord, for they thought they had lost him. He dismounted by the bridge, and they came to welcome him. Some of them asked him who the beautiful lady was, and he said, "My lords, she is your new mistress."

"Our mistress!"

"Yes, by my faith, for I have put the ring on her finger. Let her be welcomed as the lady of the house!" They received her joyfully. The Count arranges the wedding party. He summons the cook and consults with him, ordering him to make the sort of dishes he knew he liked, "and some very spicy sauces, so that our people may be honoured in honour of the new mistress, and they may all be joyful together."

The cook says: "I will prepare it."

Then the lady spoke to him: "What did the Count say to you?"

"He told me to make many good sauces for him."

"Do you want to win my favour?"

"Yes, my lady."

"Then see to it that no sauce has any flavour but garlic in it, but let them be prepared well."

"I wouldn't dare!"

"Yes, you will; he won't be upset with you if he knows that I commanded it. You should do as I wish: I can help you, or harm you!"

"My lady," he says, "I will do what you want, provided there's no shame in it. I am completely at your service." The cook goes into the kitchen. He works hard at preparing his dishes, and makes good use of his garlic. Then they called for water, rose, and went to sit at the table. The food arrived quickly for the barons and the household, and there was garlic in every dish; but there was also plenty of good wine.

The Count was very upset by this; he didn't know what to do, but he waited patiently until the people had left. He summoned his cook into the room. He came in, but far from hopefully; he was afraid, and trembling all over. "Vassal," said the Count, "by what order did you make so many garlic dishes, forgetting all the other seasonings that I commanded you to use?"

The cook hears this, and doesn't know what to do. "My lord," he says, "I'll tell you: I did it because my lady, my lord, because your lady, my lord, truly, because I didn't dare contradict her."

"By the saints who intercede for us with God, there was no call for you to disobey my commands!" The Count meted out his justice to the cook: he cut out an eye, cut off an ear and a hand, and then threw him out and forbade him to remain in his lands.

Then he spoke to his wife. "My lady," he says, "whose idea was it for you to do this to us?"

"My own, my lord, and I was wrong."

"That's not true, by Saint Denis! It wasn't your idea at all! But tell me now, my sweet friend, who gave you such guidance?"

"My lord, my mother advised me, so that I wouldn't be different from her, that I shouldn't accede to your commands, but should advance my own. That way, she said, I'd profit and win honour. This time I did as she said, but now I'm sorry, thank God!"

"My pretty one," says the Count, "by God, you will never be pardoned until you have been punished!" He jumps up, grabs her by the hair, and throws her to the ground. He beats her with a thorny stick until he leaves her practically dead. He carries her, unconscious, to a bed, and she lies there a good three month, unable to sit up at the table. The Count had her so well served there that she was healed.

Now you will hear how another story turned out. The older man's proud wife decided that she wanted to see her daughter: she wants to leave tomorrow! She takes six knights with her, and goes to the court in high state. She spoke to her husband in her usual way, telling him he can come after her if he wants. He mounted up, without contradiction, since the lady had said so. He followed along behind his wife, bringing

only a single squire who had some loyalty toward him; he also brought a boy on foot with him, and no one else.

The lady arrived most nobly, and sent a message to the Count that she was coming. The Count, who has heard that her husband has come too, thinks she is insanely proud because she, rather than her husband, sent the message. Still, he had the place well prepared with food and candles.

And so the lady was received, but not welcomed very politely. The Count treated her very coldly. Then the father comes up, and the Count jumps up to meet him. "Welcome, welcome!" he calls out, and runs to hold his stirrup, which flusters the gentleman. The Count says, "Please allow, us, my lord, to serve you in your house willingly, in any way you wish." He took him by the hand, seated him beside himself, and had him served and his boots removed.

The Countess, who had tender feelings for her mother, came out of her room; but she feared the Count for she remembered his rod. So she greeted her father first, and he returned her greeting and kissed her; then she greeted her mother. She would have been glad to go to her, but the Count seated her by her father: this upset the mother greatly.

The cooks prepared the meal quickly: they made a good fire before the tables. They rose, and went to sit down and eat. The Count treated the father very well: he seated him next to himself, and they were very nobly served. There were many fine dishes and good vintage wines, both spiced and claret. The proud lady and her six knights were seated on a bench far off, and were not served so well. The Count did all this for the woman who was so contrary to her husband.

They finish eating, have the cloths removed, relax and amuse themselves, have fruit for dessert, and then go to bed. The night passes, and day appears; the Count rose, upset because the gentleman had a wicked wife. He called him into the hall: "My lord, go and hunt in my park with dogs, nets and bows. Hunt for venison, since we have plenty of it there; all the servants and knights will go to hunt with you. I will stay with these ladies, for I have a terrible headache."

They mount up, without delay, and all go hunting; no one remains except the Count and four big, strong strapping servants. He speaks to one of his Moors: "Go get me a bull's balls, bag and all. Bring them to me with a knife and a well-sharpened razor, and do it secretly."

He did it without delay. The Count took the lady by the sleeve, sat her down next to him and said to her: "Tell me, God help you, and answer what I'm going to ask."

"Willingly, my lord, if I can."

"Where did you get that pride of yours? I would be glad to know why you treat your husband so disrespectfully. No matter what he says, you say something which displeases him and command that it should be done. A woman can do nothing more vile than to treat her husband vilely."

"My lord, I know more than he knows, and still he does nothing that pleases me."

"My lady, I know exactly where it comes from: this ferocity clings in your loins. I have observed it your eye: you have *our* kind of pride. You have balls like us, and your heart is proud because of them. I would like to examine you there, and if they're there, I'll have them removed."

The lady says: "Be quiet, good my lord! You shouldn't be joking with me like that!"

The Count doesn't want to delay. He starts to call out to his servants: "Stretch her out on the ground at once: I'll have both her legs checked out." They stretch the lady out flat.

Then she screamed, "Alas! Poor me!" One of the servants takes the razor: he gives her a six-inch slice in the flank. He puts in his fist, with one of the big bulls balls tight inside, and pulls and tugs as she screams. He pretended to pull it out of her body, and then put it into a basin. The lady at last began to think it was true: then he began again. She says: "Poor me, alas! Curse the hour I was born! From now on I'll be more sensible. If I ever get out of this, I'll never speak against my husband again!"

He cuts into the other flank, and pretends to be pulling something out: he tosses it, all bloody, into the basin. She is struck dumb, and she faints.

When she came to, the Count said, "Lady, now we have the pride that made you so daring. Now you'll be a much simpler thing. But I'm still worried that some roots might stay in there, if I don't cook it. Quickly, heat me a poker to cauterize the roots!"

The lady says: "Mercy, my lord, I promise you faithfully and swear to you by all that saints that I will not contradict my husband. I will serve him just as I should; please, I swear, on my honour."

"Wait for his return and swear to him. Then you'll be believed."

"My lord," she says, "I promise."

The Countess was sad in heart, and cried a great deal for her mother.

"Well," says the Count, "you must be grateful to me for what I've done for your mother, for I have drawn out her pride. But I'm afraid that you may take after her, and have this pride in your loins too. Wait a minute, let me check: if I find them, I'll take them out."

"Mercy, my lord, in God's name, my lord, you ought to know—you've felt there often enough—whether they're there, and they're not, by God! I'm nothing like my mother, for she's haughty and hard. My lord, I take more after my father than my mother. I only disobeyed your orders once, worse luck, and you took your vengeance for that. I assure you that I'll do anything you want and I'll like anything that you like. If I don't, cut off my head!"

The Count says: "My dear, I'll be patient for now, but if I see that you want to rebel against me, your balls will be cut out, just as we've done to your mother. For you should know that it's those balls that make women proud and foolish."

The noble man came back from hunting, after catching plenty of venison. The lady has heard him, and weeps, and he went quickly and asks what's wrong with her. The Count meets him, and spoke: "My lord, I have relieved her of the cause of her pride, these two balls that she had in her loins, which made her so haughty. See the balls in this basin, you couldn't have ended it otherwise. I want to cauterize the roots, but she is willing to swear by the saints that she will never speak against you and will serve you willingly. Once she has sworn her oath, if she ever starts to scorn you again, cut open the wounds with hot irons and cauterize the roots and nerves."

The other man thinks it's all true because he sees the balls there, and because it seems to him that the wounded lady is much improved. The lady swore her oath and gave her promise without delay. They have her wounds bandaged and a litter prepared, and carry her off on two horses. Her wounds were not mortal, for she had a good doctor who healed her, and now she loved and served her husband. She never again contradicted him in anything.

The Count conducted himself well: blessed be he, and all those who chastise their wicked wives. Shame on them—and they will be shamed—whose wives have such power. The good ones you should love and cherish and honour, but may nothing but evil come to the quarrelsome whores. That's the moral of this fable: damn the woman who scorns a man!

"Daphne and Apollo"

from *Ovide Moralisé*
French, ca. 1320

If anyone would like to know how and why the laurel first came into existence, I'll tell him without delay. Daphne was the first object of Phoebus' love; according to the story, he did not love her just by chance, but through the anger and the vengeance of the god of love, who hated him. For Cupid once was enjoying himself like a child full of delight, and was putting all his attention and efforts into feathering his arrows in order to aim them at lovers. He had a bow and a quiver full of arrows, and he was behaving nobly and elegantly.

Phoebus Apollo, who had recently killed the serpent Phiton, mocked him and said, "Why do you have that bow hanging from your neck, child? Tell me. I forbid it; put it down, and those arrows as well! Such equipment is not appropriate for you, for you are without doubt too weak. They suit me better. Give them to me, for I am stronger, and I can shoot better. With my arrows, just now, I killed the marvellous serpent Phiton, which ruled a whole acre of land. You should not have a bow or arrows; rather, let them be mine. You ought to be satisfied if I let you carry twigs and straws for inspiring passionate love: it isn't right for you to emulate me."

Cupid replied disdainfully: "Soon enough I'll make you aware of my power, and you'll be able to see for yourself whether my arrow can pierce. I think I will injure you so grievously that the wound will be hard to heal. If your arrow is sure, mine is good too, and it hits its mark! What madness has infected you so that you compare yourself to me? Your virtue and your deeds of arms, your prowess and your dignity, your valour and your divinity do not compare to mine! On this score, I want you to hear that as much as your valour is greater than that of dumb beasts, just so much is it less than my valour and glory. You are not my equal, and that's the truth."

Thereupon Cupid flew away up to Parnassus, and sat down. He drew two arrows from his quiver, which were differently made. They had been made in different ways, and so the arrows were different. The feathers were not alike; the point of one was made of purer gold than any from Arabia, sharper than a steel razor and pointed, to pierce better, and it was straight, well made and fine. Anyone who is pierced by that point is compelled to love. The other arrow is twisted and knotty, ugly and ill-made and splintered, smeared with hateful poison on its blunted leaden tip. Anyone who is touched by that arrow is completely infected with hate. With that arrow of hate the god of love struck Daphne, so that she never wanted to be a lover. He struck Phoebus too, but he did not strike him or wound him with that arrow: he pierced him, right to the heart with the pretty arrow of love.

Now Phoebus wants Daphne to be his mistress, if he can attract her to his love, but Daphne has no interest in love. It pleases her more to follow tracks in the woods, and to hunt wild beasts. She wants nothing to do with love affairs. She puts all her heart into hunting: she wishes to remain a virgin and a huntress, like Diana, her mistress. She has her hair tied back and thrown over her shoulders. Many men have asked for her in marriage, but she is so proud in heart that she will not give her love to any man or compromise her virginity: she does not want to be married.

Often her father asked and begged her to marry a lord: "Dear daughter, God help me, you ought to have a husband, from whom you might bear an heir!"

But the beautiful maiden hates marriage just as much as whoredom; her face blushes with shame; she embraces her father tightly, and says, "Dear father, I have no care or need to take a husband. In God's name, let me live a virgin and follow my lady Diana."

The father consents, and grants it to her: "Dear daughter, I would be willing, but it is a grievous thing, I think, for a woman to be both beautiful and chaste: the great beauty of your face is quite at odds with your intention."

So her father reasons with her, but the maiden replies: "I have no desire for marriage, I prefer to keep my maidenhood: virgin I am and virgin will I be; I will never give it up because of my beauty."

Phoebus burns hotter than fire in straw. Love for the beautiful Daphne troubles and torments him continually: he loves the maiden passionately, and goes about thinking his crazy thoughts with empty hope his only comfort.

Hope is indeed a great comfort: it makes a man persevere in suffering and never leaves him, all his life, but always keeps him company—unless he is one of those unfortunate creatures who has no hope in God. It does one good to have proper hope, but one who thoughtlessly puts his hope in vain foolishness is not very wise: foolish hope makes one act the fool.

Phoebus can not get enough of looking at the beautiful girl. She has unkempt blond hair, and when he sees her he says, "God, what beautiful hair, if only it were combed properly!" Her face is graced with laughing, sparkling eyes, which are flaming stars; he sees her tiny mouth, which seems to be made for kissing; but looking was not enough: he really would love to kiss her! He sees her white and rosy face, which resembles a rose and a hawthorn flower, he sees her breast and her neck, made to amuse a fool, her long fingers and her white hands her full, well-rounded, soft arms and her ribs, which were bare: he thinks everything he sees is beautiful. He puts great care into gazing at her; he thinks the rest, that he cannot see, must be more beautiful still: her soft, white flesh, her firm little breasts, round as apples. But the beautiful girl has placed her interests elsewhere, and flees more quickly than the wind: she has no interest in getting to know him.

Phoebus said: "Daphne, sweet creature, dear friend, wait for me! Why do you flee? Don't be afraid. I am not your enemy, I am your loyal friend. I have no desire to do you

any harm. If I could only win your love, I would consider myself well rewarded. My heart is completely dismayed: I am so afraid that you may harm yourself! These fields you're going through are so full of thistles and thorns! Let's slow down our labour; run more gently, and I will follow you more slowly. At least look around and find out who is asking for your love: Perhaps you will be less resistant. I am not some backwoods peasant. I want you to know this much: I don't look after sheep or cattle. Foolish girl, you don't know me at all, if you refuse to be my lover! I am the lord and king of Claros, the king of Delphi, Patheros and Tenedos. If you refuse such a lover, you are not very wise, in my opinion. I am the son of the great god Jove; I am the sun who illumines all. I discovered the art of medicine and all the power of physic and I discovered the art of music. My arrow is good and sure, but better and more piercing is the one which has wounded me in the breast. I know all the potency and the nature, the heat and the cold, of herbs and roots, and yet neither by herb nor potion could I be cured of the wound of love that I feel. My wisdom and my great knowledge are useful to all who are sick, but me alone it cannot help!" So spoke Phoebus to his love.

It often happens, I have no doubt, that someone helps and advises another but cannot solve his own problems. When a man is smitten with love, no matter how worthy, how wise or well-mannered he may be, still he acts foolishly for love. Love turns lovers to fools: the wisest have no understanding of it, and cannot help themselves. I am greatly perplexed by love, where it comes from and how it can be that love turns the wisest men into fools, but it holds them captive, just as this fable records.

Phoebus pleaded with her, and he would have said more if there were anyone willing to listen, but Daphne has no interest in words; she flees, for she is not reassured, and leaves him completely behind. He is even more dismayed, for her beauty seems twice as great to him because of the effort of her speed. Daphne runs against the wind, which often lifts her dress, and reveals her legs: they are full and tender and white. Her blond and brilliant hair swirls across her back. Phoebus sees that he's wasting his begging, for the beautiful girl in no way wishes to grant him her love: she won't listen to his entreaties any longer, so instead he follows her, running without stopping, just as love commands him. Hope and the great desire he has of accomplishing his pleasure give him the power and the will to run well. He does not go slowly, and the beautiful girl runs quickly, like one who has no desire to lose her virginity: fear gives her speed. She flees and he chases her. You never saw so hard a chase of hound and hare running neck and neck! Phoebus exerts himself to the utmost to overtake and catch the beautiful girl, and she strives to escape. Yet Phoebus is more powerful, lighter, and more anxious, for he has the help of love. So eagerly does he pursue the girl, so earnest is he in his purpose, that he lets her have no rest: he is just about to touch her back, and the breath from his mouth blows the maiden's hair.

The beautiful girl began to grow pale when she saw that she could not hold out, or endure the great effort. Running has exhausted and defeated her. She is greatly afraid

that she will be defiled. She trembles and is at a loss for fear; she saw the waves of Peneus, her father, whose daughter she was. She feared Phoebus, who was pursuing her, and she cried out, with great emotion: "Dear father, help me! Open, earth, and swallow me up! Or change this face which puts me in great fear of corruption, and destroy it!"

She had scarcely spoken these words when all her body grew stiff: her belly, which was not pregnant, was all girdled with thin bark; her flaming golden tresses became lush foliage; her arms were changed into long branches: all her body was transformed: the maiden's swift feet were held by strong roots. If she was beautiful in body before, she is still just as beautiful a tree. Phoebus loves her as before. He feels her warm and throbbing breast, which trembles under the thin bark. He tried to kiss her, it seems, but the tree shrinks from his kiss.

Phoebus said: "Since Fortune so harms me that I may not have you as my wife, you will be my tree, and from you I will make a chaplet and a crown: you will be the laurel, and I will give you a very noble gift, for honour and for dignity, as sign of love and glory: those who win victories will make crowns from you for their heads. In great games and festivals you will be forever exalted, and your verdure will never wither: I will make you always be in leaf, and, as I cannot grow old, I want you never to be dry, but I want you to have the greenness of eternal leaves, in all seasons." The tree, as a sign that it is willing, lowers its crown and bows to him. So it was by divine power that the laurel was first created and now has greatly multiplied.

Now it is appropriate for me to explain this fable, and I will tell you what meaning it may hold. Daphne was the daughter of Peneus. Peneus is a river where there is a great abundance of laurels. Phoebus, who begged her for love, is the sun, it seems to me, whose heat, mixed together with moisture, caused these trees to multiply and flourish.

There may be another meaning in it, in a story in accordance with the truth. Daphne was a young girl, gentle, young, attractive and beautiful, wealthy and of great nobility, who wished to live in virginity, without violating her maidenhood; but the beauty of her face moved many men to request her love. Daphne would not assent to love any man for anything on earth, nor to yield her virginity. Phoebus, by entreaties and by gifts, tempted her first in vain, for he could never move her enough that he might have a relationship with her, not for promises or prayers. Afterwards, he thought of taking her by force and deprive her of her maidenhood, but the maiden, innocent and wise, would sooner let herself be burned, fled, in order to guard her honour, so that he might not dishonour her, and deflower her against her will. She made such a great effort, this beautiful girl ran so much, that in fleeing she died, before he could deflower her. She was buried under a laurel. Thus the fable was created that she was changed into a laurel, because she was virgin and pure, and she kept her heart and body free from filth, living all her life in verdure of chastity.

But now let us give this fable another worthwhile interpretation. Daphne, who all her life wished to live in pure chastity and never wished to be corrupted, signifies

virginity, which has no interest in corruption. Daphne was the daughter of the cold, which is signified by the river: she was so extremely cold that no natural heat could move to folly this girl, who wanted to live chastely. Daphne wanted to follow Diana, who is the clear, shining moon, in clean life and purity. Apollo loved her for a long time, and he is Phoebus, whom the Integument according to pagan belief, calls the god of wisdom, who teaches and instructs all things. He is the sun, which burns and illuminates—that is, wisdom and charity—which ought to be in virginity. I do not consider a virgin wise if she guards her body but in her heart is corrupted or perverted: her thought ought to be clean. She ought to live chastely and charitably for God: otherwise I do not value her continence one bit, if the mind has a desire to commit the carnal sins with which the body would be stained, if only there were an opportunity. I cannot believe that such virginity could be holy. If the determination is feigned, so that any woman from hypocrisy—in order to be praised and honoured, or for a little vainglory, or to acquire human praise—shuns the company of the flesh, she is not well-bred. So says the Holy Scripture, and God has no care for such virgins. This is not virtue, rather it is guile. Concerning these women, God says in the gospel that their lights are extinguished, their works are false and feigned, full of foolish vanity, empty of true charity. She who has emptied her vessel when she comes to midnight—that is, to the great Day of Judgment—will find, sadly, that marriage with the Spouse has been closed off, when God has closed the door which now is open and waiting. May God never hate us so much that he close us off from marriage to him! May the Enemy not stretch out his tail to lead us to the infernal cage where the damned are in a furnace!

Daphne, who fled so quickly from carnal touch and then was changed into a tree, signifies that whoever wants to be a perfect virgin must keep heart and body and thought entirely intact, with no physical stirring and no thought of corruption and with no lapse; then she will be made a tree which no wind can dislodge. Just as the wind cannot move the strong tree by its shaking, so too gifts, promises and entreaties should not move a virgin heart in any way—for all these are the winds of vanity which make her lose her virginity. Daphne was changed into a laurel rather than an oak or cherry tree or into any other tree one might imagine, because just as the laurel tree is green and does not ever lose its greenness for either heat or cold, but stays green in every season without bearing fruit, so too virginity should remain green, and live without bearing fruit

For it never happened and never will that virginity should bear offspring, except for that one who, contrary to nature, gave birth to her Father and Master, God, who was willing to be born of the Virgin. If a woman preserves her virginity, wisely and in charity, and manages to persevere in it until the end, God in His great and perfect glory will give her the crown of the heavenly virgins as a sign of her victory.

I can set forth another meaning for it. By Daphne I can understand and gloss that glorious Maiden, pure, attractive, beautiful Virgin, whom God chose above all others.

Jesus, in Whom all good things abound, the Son of God, light of the world, the sun Who illuminates all men, master who invented all disciplines, every art, all wisdom and every science, the physician who knows all the cures and all the natures of the plants, who can bring every sick man to health and resurrect the dead, King of heaven, earth and sea, and King of hell, loved her so much that He wished to join Himself to her physically, and allowed Himself to be wounded and pierced in the heart with the point of love for the love of human nature. This blessed Mary, Virgin Mother in whom are married virgin plenitude and plenteous virginity, she who without corruption was virgin in her conception, virgin in her childbearing and virgin afterwards perpetually—this maiden, virgin and pure is the laurel, full of greenness, with which the Son of God crowned himself. For the Virgin surrounded him in her body, for He was willing to descend into it and take human and mortal flesh. She pleased God, and God seated her in His high court in eternal glory, where she reigns with him worthily. The harp of Apollo (which means common and divine faith) keeps her in eternal remembrance. She is the one through whom God advances those who have the victory over the world and exalts them in his high glory.

Now I will tell you the meaning of the quarrel and the argument between Phoebus and the god of love, concerning their valour and their ways. From this comes the answer to a doubtful question which anyone who knows how to explain the fable is accustomed to make and propose. It is this: which has greater power, good love or wisdom? These two things are properly in God, Who is perfect good love and wisdom, unconditionally, without discord and without difference. Everything that there is in the Deity is one, without diversity; but with respect to the effect and the deeds of wisdom and love, and with respect to our understanding, there seems to be a difference between them. Wisdom properly made man and the world together, but man sinned by his folly, and so was condemned to mortal pain and eternally damned. If God in His pity and His love for man had not interceded, it's the truth, it would have been better for man never to have been made than that he should have later sinned against God and incur mortal damnation. In order to rescue man, the love of God fashioned wisdom from the dart of good love, and sent it to the world in human form to join itself to our nature. Cupid, the one who guides us and shows us the right way of good love, in my opinion, represents God, the King of paradise, who indoctrinates us in love if we hold well to His teaching. He certainly showed us a sign of love when he created sky and earth, world and sea and all the things in them for our benefit. God loved us well, without doubt, when He made us in His likeness and in His image, and when He caused his wisdom to descend to earth and take human flesh, to release us from servitude from pain and mortal suffering, where man placed himself by his folly, and when He had His body delivered to death to heal us and deliver us from death and the infernal prison and to make us heirs and participants in the sovereign heritage.

Our God, our Saviour, Who loved and cherished us, is Cupid, the good archer, who well knows how to feather his arrows well to strike lovers. The arrow is the commandments of the law, which are made differently and of diverse workmanship; one part teaches us to love, the other to hate, one part to follow and the other to flee; the point is compunction of the heart and good intentions should be called the shaft. The arrow must be feathered with two feathers, in order to fly straight; these feathers, for whoever would pay close attention to them, are two divine commandments. Upon these two especially the law and the prophets depend, and all those who undertake to perform these two commandments loyally know well how to shoot these arrows. One of the feathers, as I understand it, is that in every hour and at all times, with heart and soul and will, we ought to do what pleases God and love Him more than all things with noble pure heart, without bitterness, like our father and our master: that is the feather which sits on the right. The other feather is that one must love one's neighbour as oneself, and not act unfaithfully toward him. He who has feathered his arrow in this way will accomplish the law which our lord has given. This arrow is named charity; from it come in truth all good things and all courtesy. Charity flees all villainy, all evil, all disloyalty; charity loves all loyalty. The one who is pierced with this point is bound to love all reason and all moderation, in all respects, if he has no tolerance for any outrage. God was willing to strike His son with this arrow when, in order to cure us, he was willing to offer up His Blessed Son to pain and death on our behalf. He will certainly show us the way of love. Charity, as God is my witness, is the best, the most certain and the sovereign arrow. I know that whoever has this arrow is in God and God is in him, for God Himself is charity, by witness of scriptural authority. He who lacks this arrow is surely lacking in all other good things. Little can he value his wisdom, his dignity or his power; for without the virtue of charity, all other good things are vanity. Charity is the enkindling flame, with which God enflames us with love for Him. It is the torch and the arrow with which God kindles and catches us.

The archer of filthy business, the devil, the enemy, draws another arrow, quite the opposite, and has put many people in misery with it. This arrow is twisted and knotty, rough and harsh and splintered; this one is tipped with hate. The soul which is touched by it hates all good and all moderation all reason, all law and right, all honour, all loyalty, and loves all disloyalty all sin, all villainy, all evil and all misconduct, all filth and all vileness, all evil and all iniquity. This arrow is named envy, and its feathers are the opposite of those of the one described before.

"The Conception of Jaume el Conqueridor"

from *The Chronicle*

RAMON MUNTANER

Catalan, ca. 1330

One can clearly understand that God's grace is and must be with all those who are descended from King Jaume of Aragon, son of King Pere of Aragon and of the Most High Lady Maria of Montpelier, since his birth was a special miracle from God and came about by His act. So that all those who hear this book will know about it, I will recount it.

It is the truth that King Pere took as his wife and queen Lady Maria of Montpelier, because of her high lineage and her nobility and in order to acquire Montpelier and the barony which she held in freehold. Later on, however, King Pere, who was young when he married her, became infatuated with other ladies, and it followed that he did not visit Lady Maria of Montpelier. Sometimes he came to Montpelier without coming near her, and because of this their subjects and especially the chief citizens of Montpelier were greatly saddened and upset.

It happened once that King Pere came to Montpelier and fell in love with a lady of Montpelier. He held tournaments and jousts for her and did so much that he made his love obvious to everyone. Knowing this, the consuls and chief citizens of Montpelier summoned a knight who was the King's confidant in such matters, and told him that if he did what they told him they would make him rich and prosperous forever. He said that they should say what they wanted: there was nothing in the world he would not do for their sakes, provided it was not contrary to his faith. There were mutual pledges of secrecy about the matter.

"Now do you know what we want to say to you? This is how things stand: as you know, our Lady the Queen is one of the best and holiest and most virtuous ladies in the world; and you know that the Lord King does not visit to her, to the great injury and harm of the whole kingdom. The Queen acts like a virtuous lady and does not reveal that it troubles her, but it is an injury for us. If the King dies and there is no heir, it would be a great harm and disgrace for all his country, and especially it would be a great injury for our Lady the Queen and for Montpelier, since it would have to pass into other hands. On no account would we want Montpelier to ever be separated from the Kingdom of Aragon. And so, if you are willing, you could give us advice."

The knight answered: "I say to you, my Lords, I will not leave undone anything that depends upon me, anything about which I can give advice as to the honour and

advantage of Montpelier, of my Lord the King and of my lady Queen Maria, and of all the people."

"Since you have spoken so well, we know that you are the King's confidant in the matter of his love for that lady, and that you are trying to make her his. We beg you, therefore, to tell him that you have arranged it for him to have the lady and that she will come to him secretly in his chamber; but that she does not want there to be any light, so that she will not be seen by anyone. At this he will have great pleasure. When he has gone to bed and the court has sent everyone away, you will come to us here, at the consulate of Montpelier. We twelve consuls will be here, and we will another twelve of the noblest knights and citizens of Montpelier and of the barony with us. We will also have here our Lady Maria of Montpelier, the Queen. Along with twelve of the most honourable ladies of Montpelier, and twelve damsels, she will go with us to the King. Two notaries, the best of Montpelier, will also come, and the bishop's clerk and two canons and four worthy monks. Every man, lady and damsel will carry a candle, which they will light when Lady Maria enters the King's chamber. We will all gather by the door of the chamber until it is nearly dawn, when you will open the room. When it is open, we will all enter the King's chamber, carrying our candles. He will be surprised, and then we will tell him everything and show him that he has by his side Lady Maria, Queen of Aragon, and say that we trust in God and in Our Lady Saint Mary that on that night such fruit has been engendered as will be pleasing to God and all the world, and his kingdom will have been provided for."

When the knight heard and understood their purpose, which was holy and just, he said that he was ready to do all that they had asked and that he would not be held back by the fear of losing the King's love, or even his own life. He trusted in Our Lord, the true God, that this action would come to a happy conclusion, just as they had planned it, and that they might be sure of that. "But still, my lords," said the knight, "since you have planned so well, I beg you to do something more for my sake."

"We are prepared to do all you advise us."

"Then, my Lords, in honour of God and of Our Lady Saint Mary of Vallvert, today, when you have begun to confer on these matters, is Saturday. I pray you and advise that, on Monday, in honour of God and Our Lady Saint Mary all priests and monk in Montpelier should begin to say masses of Our Lady Saint Mary, and continue doing so for seven days, because of the Seven Joys that she had in her Beloved Son. May it please her that God make us all joyful and content with this agreement, and bring it about that the Kingdom of Aragon and the counties of Barcelona, Urgel and Montpelier and all the other territories may be well provided with a good Lord." He would arrange that, on the following Sunday, at the hour of vespers, they could do all that they had planned, and they would have masses sung for Our Lady Saint Mary of Vallvert.

They all agreed with this. Furthermore, they decreed that on Sunday, when this was being done, all the people of Montpelier should go to the churches and keep a vigil

there, praying, while the Queen was with the King, and that on the Saturday before, everyone should fast on bread and water. So it was arranged and disposed, and with that, they went all together, as they were assembled in council, to Lady Maria of Montpelier, the Queen of Aragon, and told her all they had planned and decided.

Lady Maria told them that they were her natural subjects and that she was sure that throughout all the world it was said that Montpelier's council was the wisest in the world, and that the world therefore bore witness that she must be pleased with their advice, and that she considered their visit to her to be like the annunciation which the angel Gabriel made to Our Lady Saint Mary. As the salvation of the human race had been accomplished through that salutation, so also their agreement would come to a proper conclusion leasing to God and our Lady Saint Mary and all the Heavenly Court, and honourable and profitable to the soul and body of the King, of herself and of all their subjects. "Thus may it be fulfilled. Amen."

So they departed in great joy and you may well believe that they all spent that week praying and fasting, especially the Queen.

Now someone might ask, "How could it be that the King did not notice it, when all that week prayers were made so openly for this event and everyone was fasting?" I answer and say that there was a command throughout all the King's lands that prayers should be said every day, especially praying that God should establish peace and love between the King and the Queen, and that God should give such offspring to them as would be pleasing to God and beneficial for the kingdom. Every time the King went to Montpelier, special services were established for this purpose.

When they told the King about it, he said: "They do well; it will be as God pleases." These appropriate words the King spoke, and other good words which he and the Queen and her people spoke about it turned out to be prophetic, for Our Lord and true God fulfilled it when it pleased Him, as you will soon hear. Therefore the King paid no attention to the prayers that were being said, and no one knew what was going to happen, except those who had been present at the Council. So the prayers and masses and other holy services went on for seven days that week; and meanwhile the knight acted on the matter and brought it to the conclusion which, as you have heard, was planned.

So that on Sunday night, when everybody in the palace had gone to bed, the twenty-four chief citizens, the abbots and priors, the bishop's clerk, the monks, the twelve ladies and the twelve damsels, with candles in their hands, entered the palace, along with the two notaries. They all came together to the door of the King's chamber, and the Queen went in. They remained outside, all together, kneeling in prayer. The King and the Queen lay together, and the King believed he was holding close the lady he was infatuated with.

All the churches of Montpelier remained open that night, and all the people were in them praying to God, according to the arrangement as has already been said. When it

was dawn, all the chief citizens, prelates, monks and ladies, each with their lighted candle in hand, entered the chamber, where the King was in bed with the Queen. He was surprised, and jumped up at once on the bed and seized his sword. They all knelt down and said, weeping: "Lord, if it please Your Grace, look and see who is lying next to you."

The Queen sat up, and the King recognized her. They told him all that they had done. The King said that since it was so, may it please God that their intention should be fulfilled.

The King rode out that day and departed from Montpelier.

The citizens of Montpelier kept six of the King's favourite knights with them. All together, just as they had been when they made their plan, they decided that neither they, nor the Queen, nor their wives nor the damsels who had been present should leave the palace until nine months had passed—nor the two notaries who that same night, in the presence of the King, had written public letters about the event. So they all remained with the Queen, with great delight and joy, and their joy was even greater when they saw that it had pleased God for their plan to come to a good issue; the Queen was growing bigger.

At the end of nine months, according to the will of nature, she gave birth to a beautiful and fine son, who was born for the good of Christians and especially for the good of his peoples. Never was a lord born to whom God showed greater or more conspicuous favour. With great joy and satisfaction they baptized him in the church of Our Lady Saint Mary of the Tables in Montpelier, and by the grace of God gave him the name "Jaume." He reigned for a long time and won great victories, sustaining and exalting the Catholic Faith and especially all his vassals and subjects.

"The Deception of Women"

from *Dives and Pauper*
English, ca. 1410

DIVES: Reason and Holy Writ impel me to grant that both adultery and simple fornication are very grievous sins, but adultery is more grievous; I would like to avoid both sins. But women are the fiend's snares and tempt men to lechery so much that it is very hard to me for to restrain myself. *"Adam, Sampsonem, Petrum, David and Salomonem femina decepit; quis modo tutus erit?* A woman deceived Adam and Samson, Peter, David and Solomon; who may then be safe from woman's guile?"

PAUPER: Many a man has been deceived through wicked women more by his own folly than by the deceit of a woman, but many more women have been deceived by the malice of men than men have ever been deceived by the malice of woman. Therefore the woman lecher is called the snare of the fiends that hunt after man's soul, for Solomon says: *"inueni amariorem morte mulierem etc.* I have found woman more bitter than death, who is the snare of the hunters, her heart is a net and her hands are hard bands. He who pleases God will escape from her, but the sinful man will be caught by her," (Ecclesiastes 7: 27).

But men are called not only the "snare" of the fiend but also they are called his "net spread abroad on the hill of Tabor" to catch many at once, (Hosea 5: 1). Man's malice is called a net spread abroad on a high hill, for it is open and boldly done, not rarely but frequently; therefore, when Holy Writ reproves the malice of men, it speaks in the plural number, meaning many, but when it reproves the malice of woman it speaks in the singular number, meaning few, as a sign that there are more wicked men than women and commonly more malice in men than in women—although some woman are very malicious. Fighting, robbery, manslaughter, open lechery, gluttony, guile, falsehood, perjury, treachery, false contriving and such other horrible sins reign more in man than in woman.

This false defence that men use to excuse their sin on account of the malice of woman began with Adam, and destroyed Adam and all mankind. He tried to excuse his sin sinfully by blaming woman when God took him to task him for his sin, and he put woman at fault. He also put God at fault, who made woman, and answered very proudly, as men still do nowadays, and said to God: "The woman that you gave to me to be my fellow gave me of the tree and I ate thereof," as if to say: "If you had not given her to me to be my fellow I would not have sinned." And so despite the fact that he was more at fault than the woman, still he would not acknowledge any fault, but put woman and especially God who made woman at fault.

DIVES: How was Adam more at fault than the woman?

PAUPER: For God gave the precept to him principally, that he should not eat of that tree, and Eve knew it only from Adam. Woman was tempted by the fiend miraculously through the adder, which walked upright at that time and had a face like a woman, as Bede and the Master of Stories say. She was deceived by its fair promises and its false, sly speech, for it promised her that they would not die, but be as Gods, knowing good and evil. Adam had no external temptation except a simple word from his wife, who offered him the apple, for we do not find that she said any deceitful word to him. And therefore since man was forbidden by God's mouth and she only by man, and man had less temptation than woman, and would not accuse himself or confess his guilt, but put the blame all on woman and on God, therefore he sinned more than woman, for woman confessed her own guilt, but she asked no mercy. She made no such excuse, but for the most part confessed her guilt, in that she said, "The adder has deceived me." Inasmuch as she acknowledged that she was deceived, she acknowledged that she had done wrong, and had acted unwisely and otherwise than she ought to have done.

Because woman humbled herself and acknowledged her lack of wisdom and her folly, therefore God put in woman at that time hope for our salvation, when he said to the adder: "I will put enmity between you and woman and between your seed and her seed, and she will break your head." That was the fiend, which was the "head" and leader of the adder at that time. The "seed" of the fiend are wicked works and wicked people, to whom God said in the gospel: *"Vos ex patre diabole estis,* (John 8: 44), You are of your father the fiend." The spiritual "seed" of woman are her good deeds, which the fiend and the fiend's limbs envy greatly, and commonly women feel more disgust at sin than do men. And by Our Lady, blessed may she be, the fiend's power is destroyed. Also, the "seed" of woman was Christ, born of the Virgin Mary without any act of a man. There never was a man who was properly "seed of woman" except Christ alone, and there is always enmity between Christ and the fiend and his seed. For, as Saint Paul says, "Christ and Belial, light and darkness, may not be in accord," (Second Corinthians 6: 14–15). For this reason Saint Paul says that Adam was not deceived in the first lie, but woman was deceived, (First Timothy 2: 14).

Therefore, as the gloss says, when God took Adam to task he did not say "That woman has deceived me," as the woman said "The adder has deceived me," but he said, "Woman gave me of the tree and I have eaten." And also, as the gloss says, Adam was so wise that he might not believe the fiend's tales nor be deceived in the same way that woman was, and for woman was not as wise as Adam; therefore she believed his tales and so she was deceived. The greater Adam's wisdom, the greater was his sin when he fell. But although Adam was not deceived externally by another, he was internally deceived, by himself, by private pride, as Saint Augustine says, *On the City of God,* Book 14 chapter 13, where he says that Adam and Eve first began to be wicked internally, and that by this private wickedness they fell into open disobedience; for, as he says there, "pride is the beginning of all sin, *inicium omnis peccati superbia,"* (Ecclesiasticus 10: 15).

And as Solomon says: "*Contricionem precedit superbia et ante ruinam exaltatur spiritus,* (Proverbs 16: 18), Before breaking and destruction goes pride, and before an open fall the spirit of man and woman is lifted up by pride." Therefore Saint Augustine says, in the same chapter, that both Adam and Eve were wicked and deceived by pride and thought too highly of themselves before they ate from the tree, for private internal falling went before open external falling, through disobedience. And so Adam was deceived and had fallen through pride before Eve gave him the apple, and Eve was deceived by pride before the serpent deceived her, for, as Saint Augustine says, in the same passage, they coveted a greater excellence and higher degree than God ordained for them.

They both sinned grievously, but Adam more grievously, as I said before; therefore Saint Paul does not say that all men died "through the sin of Eve," but "through the sin of Adam." And God did not say to Adam "Accursed be the earth in Eve's sin," nor did he say "Accursed be the earth in *your* [i.e. *plural*] sin," but to Adam alone he said "Accursed be the earth in *thy* work and *thy* sin." And therefore, Saint Ambrose says, commenting on Luke, that Eve "sinned more through frailty and instability and changeability than through wickedness: *mobilitate magis animi quam prauitate peccauit.*" Christ did not become a woman, He became a man to save mankind, so that, just as mankind was lost by man, so mankind should be saved by man, and therefore in manhood He would die for mankind, since manhood had caused mankind to be lost. He also became man and not woman to preserve the order of nature, because woman's sin was less grievous than Adam's sin and harmed mankind less, and because woman was less involved in the first lie than was man. Therefore God took His manhood only from woman without any act by a man. In that He became man, He did great honour to man; but in that He took His manhood only from woman without any act by man, He did great honour to woman, for only from female nature did He make the medicine for the sin of Adam to heal mankind of the hard sickness of Adam.

DIVES: Your words are astonishing, but I cannot contradict you, because of reverence for Our Lady, mother and maiden, who bore grace for mankind and is our help in every need. But still I say, as I said before, woman deceived Samson who was so strong.

PAUPER: Woman did not deceive him until he had deceived himself through lechery and misgovernance of himself. First, he married a heathen woman, against God's law and against the will of his father and of his mother, because of the lust and wicked love he had for her. After that, he lay by a common woman who was a heathen, and after that he took another heathen woman as his concubine, named Dalila, who deceived him greatly and brought him to his death. He was false to God, and women were false to him. Women saw that he was besotted upon them, and therefore they treated him as a sot. He deceived himself and acted very unwisely when he allowed a woman to bind him in the presence of his enemies, and when he told a heathen woman his counsel and

how his enemies might harm him most. Even though God turned his foolish deeds to the worship of God and of God's law, still Samson was not excused thereby, for he did much wrong and much folly, (Judges 16: 4–31).

David also was deceived by his own lust and lechery, and not by the woman Bathsheba, as you said in your verse; for we read in Holy Writ, in Second Kings 11: 2–17, that once when King David rose from his sleep after midday and stood in an upper room of his palace he saw a fair woman washing herself in her chamber. He did not know the woman; the woman was not thinking about him and did not know about his wicked will, as the book shows there. At once he sent messengers after this woman, and when she came to him, he lay with her and got her with child. As soon as he knew that she was with child, to hide his sin he sent after her husband Uriah, so that he would come home and meddle with his wife so that the child should be named to him and not to David. Because this good knight would not come to his wife or practice lust with his body as long as God's army was in the field at the siege of the city of Rabat, David sent him back to Joab, the prince of the army, with letters concerning his death, and treacherously had him slain. Here you can see that David was overcome by lechery and deceived by the fiend before the woman came to him; for, as Christ says in the gospel, (Matthew 5: 28), "Whosoever looks on a woman in will to do wrong with her, at once he has committed lechery" and sins against this commandment: "*Non mechaberis,* Thou shalt not commit adultery." David looked on that woman intending to do lechery when the woman thought no evil. He sent after her as after his liege woman, and she did not know why. When she came to him, as to her king, he lay with her sinfully, for it was very hard for her to prevent him.

Also Peter denied Christ at the time of His passion and ran away from Christ before any woman spoke to him that time; and so he deceived himself, and the woman did not deceive him. She did her office, for she was the porter and the keeper of the door, as Saint Gregory says; she said to him that he was one of Christ's disciples—and she spoke the truth—because she had been ordered to let none of Christ's disciples enter. And at the first word, he denied Christ and said that he did not know him. And not only did a woman make Saint Peter forsake Christ in this manner, but men also said the same words to him, and out of fear he denied Christ at once, and swore that he did not know him. And therefore, if it is a reproach to women that a woman caused Saint Peter to deny Christ, then it is as great a reproach to men, and even more: for although he denied Christ at the woman's word, he did not swear, and therefore did not commit perjury, until men said the same words to him, (Matthew 26: 69–75 and Mark 14: 66–72).

Solomon, too, deceived himself before any woman deceived him, for he took to him many heathen women of false belief, to have his lust. He sought them, they did not seek him. He knew well that it was against God's law for a king to have as many wives and concubines as he had, for God commanded that the kings of his people should not have many wives or keep large numbers of horses in provocation of the people or gather great

weights of gold and silver to the harm of the people, as Holy Writ shows well, (Deuteronomy 17: 16–17). Also it was forbidden to him and to all others to consort with heathen women, and Solomon acted against all this in high offence to God. Solomon sought the company of heathen women: the women were stable in their false belief, and he was unstable in his right belief and followed their false belief and abandoned God's law in great part and worshipped false gods. Lechery overcame him long before many of those women even knew him.

And so even these days men are overcome by lechery without woman's company and without any action by women; for, as Christ says in the gospel, whosoever looks on a woman intending to do wrong with her, even if she is not thinking about him, he commits lechery. If he fondles her or smells her or speaks to her or goes to her or seeks by wiles and sleights to have his lust with her, even if the woman does not consent to him and even if he is prevented from his wicked will, still he is guilty of lechery and acts against this commandment of God: "*Non mechaberys,* Thou shalt not commit adultery." Men lechers ride from town to town to get women for their lust. They seek the women, and the women do not seek them. They cast many wiles to get woman's assent in sin. Men are commonly the agents and initiators of lechery; and then, whether the woman assents or not, still the man is guilty.

And it often happens that men think that they are sure of the woman's assent, but then the woman will not assent out of fear of God. If she assented before and promised the man to follow his lust, but after repents and withdraws from his wicked company, then that lecherous man will defame all women and say that they are false and deceptive. Such lechers speak most villainy of women, because they cannot have their foul lust of them at will. Because they cannot defile them with their body, they defile them with their tongue. They speak most wickedly about them, and defame them falsely and cause them whatever harm they can. We have an example in the book of Daniel, 13: 1–64, of the good woman Susanna and of those two false old priests who were judges and governors of the people for that year. These priests, by one assent, waited to catch this woman alone in her garden when she went to wash, as was the custom then. But because she would not assent to their wickedness, but cried for help, at once they cried out against her; and when men came, they said that they found her lying with a young man, and so falsely condemned her to death because they might not perform their foul lust with her. But at the prayer of Susanna, God sent Daniel his prophet, and he took them and convicted them in their falsehood and slew them and saved Susanna. We find also in the Second Book of Kings, 13: 1–19, that Amon the son of David pretended to be sick, and begged his father David that Tamar his sister might come and look after him. When she had come, he spoke to her, wanting to lie with her, but she would not assent. And then he lay with her by force, and so defiled his own sister. At once he hated her more than ever had he loved her before, because that would

not assent to him, and spitefully put her out of his chamber and shut the door after her. For this deed Amon was slain soon after by his brother Absolon.

DIVES: And still many woman will assent to lust of the flesh very easily if it is offered.

PAUPER: That is true, but women are not as ready to assent as men are to offer, and the one who offers and begins it assents first and is more at fault.

DIVES: You excuse women a lot, and accuse men!

PAUPER: I accuse no good man, but wicked men and lechers; I do not excuse any wicked woman, but only good women who are falsely accused of lechery, not only individually but also collectively, for the proud malice of man unreasonably defames the whole race of woman, and, as Adam did, puts his sin on woman and refuses to accuse his own malice to get mercy.

Dives: Solomon spoke much evil of women.

PAUPER: And Solomon spoke much good of women, for he said: "*Mulier tymens Deum ipsa laudabitur,* the woman who fears God will be praised," (Proverbs 31: 30). Solomon reproved wicked women and praised good women, just as he reproved wicked men and praised good men.

DIVES: Solomon says: "*Omnis malicia nequicia mulieris,*" and "*breuis est omnis malicia super maliciam mulieris,*" (Ecclesiasticus 25: 17, 26), "the wickedness of woman is all malice," and "every malice is short compared to the malice of woman."

PAUPER: It is true that when women abandon themselves to wickedness they are very malicious; but when they devote themselves to goodness they are very good. And therefore Solomon in the next chapter praises women very much and says that "Happy is the man that has a good woman as his wife. His years shall be doubled... and he will end his years in peace. A good woman is a good portion in the portion of those who fear God, and she will be given... to a man for his good deeds"; and "The grace of the diligent woman shall delight her husband and fatten his bones. Her discipline and her nurture is the gift of God"; and "The holy and chaste woman is grace upon grace"; and "As the sun shining illuminates the world in the height of the day, so the beauty of a good woman is for the comfort and ornament of her household"; and "As golden pillars set on silver bases, so are firm feet on the soles of the stable woman"; and "Endless foundations on a solid stone are God's commandments in the heart of a holy woman: *Fundamenta eterna supra petram solidam et mandata Dei in corde mulieris sancte,*" (Ecclesiasticus 26: 1–3; 16–17; 19; 21; 23–4).

DIVES: Solomon says: "*Vinum et mulieres apostatare faciunt sapientes,* (Ecclesiasticus 19: 2), Wine and women make wise men doubt and forsake God's law and do wrong.

PAUPER: And yet is there no fault in the wine or often in the woman, but the fault is in the one who unwisely uses the wine and unwisely uses the woman and others of God's creatures. If you drink wine until you are drunk and fall into lechery through your gluttony, the wine is not to blame; you are to blame because you can not or will not control yourself. If you look on a woman and are caught by her beauty and assent to do

wrong, the woman is not to blame nor her beauty, which God has given her; you are to blame for not keeping your heart from wicked thoughts. When you should be praising God, you think evil; you misuse God's fair creature in offence to God when you ought to praise your God. If you feel tempted by the sight of woman, control your sight better. If her dalliance stirs you to lechery, flee her dalliance. If you know that she is ready for lechery, flee her company: for against lechery, flight is best fight. You are free to go away from her; nothing constrains you to do lechery but your lecherous heart.

Fleurie

French, 15th Century

Alexander was a very handsome and amorous knight. He was married to a beautiful, virtuous lady named Iole, who was very humble in speech, and they had a beautiful daughter named Fleurie. When she was about fifteen years old, her mother died, leaving the daughter devastated.

Because she was so beautiful, the King was so much in love with her that he could not control his affections for her. He could not have his way with her properly; so that he could enjoy her legally, he made an edict, despite the fact that it was contrary to reason and against the law to do it: by special permission, henceforth the kings of Hungary could marry their daughters if they wanted.

Fleurie realized that this edict was contrary to reason and that it was made because of her. To turn her father away and to change his emotions for her, she spoke to her servant Agrapine, who had raised and instructed her: "My governess, my friend, you know that we should love, fear, serve and honour God above all things, and that it would be better to suffer death than to do otherwise. Now it is true that my lord the King has just made an edict because of me which is contrary to God and the law. And so I would like you to find out from him what it is that makes him love me like this and to want me for his wife, and what it is about me that most pleases him. When I know this, I will act in such a way that he will have to be satisfied."

Agrapine went to the King and performed the task Lady Fleurie had set for her very well. The King replied that he loved and was pleased by everything about his daughter, especially her beautiful hands.

She reported this to Lady Fleurie, who said, "Sweet God, my creator, I wish to obey You, and I prefer to die rather than that my lord the King, my father, should put himself outside the law on my account. Pardon me, my creator, for what I am about to do for love of You; this should satisfy him somewhat."

She had brought everything necessary for cutting off her hands and for caring for her afterwards so that death would not result. She summoned one of her chief servants, whom she could trust, and her maid Agrapine; she closed the door behind them, and said, "It is necessary for you to obey me if you want at all to have my love. You must know that my lord the King, my father, loves me uncontrollably, and wants to marry me and have me as his wife, which is contrary to reason. It is the case that everything about me pleases him, especially my hands. In this I will give him satisfaction, for I will have them cut off and I will send them to him as a gift. You must cut them off, and you, Agrapine, take them to him."

When they heard what she wanted, they did not want to obey her or cut them off. Fleurie began to change colour, to grow red with anger, but she threatened them so

harshly that her servant cut them off for her and cared for the wound as well as he could. Then she sent him to France with plenty of money, and told him that if the King banished her she would come to see him in the city of Paris.

Then she had Agrapine take her hands as a gift. When the King saw them he almost went mad and lost him mind, and he went for a long time without speaking because of his sorrow. Then he summoned his council and told them what his daughter Fleurie had done, much to their astonishment. Then he ordered that she be burnt in his presence. His counsellors told him not to be so cruel toward his own flesh and blood, and said that he would be greatly blamed for it; rather, he should put her and her damsel Agrapine in a boat on the sea, and let God do with her as He pleased, and let them go wherever they could go. The King agreed to this, and so it was done. The wind took them to the port of Marseille.

The day they arrived, Varon the Count of Provence noticed their boat and went to see them. When he saw this beautiful woman with no hands, he felt great pity for her. He brought them to his lady mother, and gave orders that they should be treated well. Lady Hecuba, the Count's mother, was not pleased about it, but the Count was very happy to gaze at Fleurie's beauty. She pleased him greatly, and so he loved her very much; he asked her to be his mistress, but she refused. But because the Count was very insistent about it, she answered him: "My father and sustaining lord, I would never perform such a dishonourable deed, for the love of God my creator and of the place I have come from, and I would rather have to beg for my bread. Please, do not ask me again to sin." Then she told him where she came from and the reason why she had no hands. When he heard the story, he was astonished, and said to her: "Because I see that you are so good, and you are the daughter of a king, if it pleases you I will take you as my wife." She agreed to this humbly, and married him.

But his mother Lady Hecuba was very angry.

And she conceived by him a beautiful son. When she was in her sixth month, the Count went to Hungary to find out the truth of the matter. When he arrived there, he was uncertain how to go about enquiring, for the events with Fleurie had happened in secret.

It was reported to the King that the Count of Provence had arrived in his country and that it was appropriate to entertain him according to his rank. "But surely," said the King, "I can not. I am unable to be joyous because of the harm that I did to my daughter. But please, my lords, you entertain him lavishly with my wealth, for he has been my dear friend for a long time." When the Count had been graciously received by the lords of the country, he went to thank the King, and asked him the cause of his anxiety, and the King told him the truth. When the Count heard it, he knew and recognized that what his wife had told him was true, and felt that he had been greatly honoured.

At the end of nine months, she gave birth to a beautiful child who was named Lamorad. Fleurie ordered that her husband should be informed, since he sired it. When

the messenger had the letters, he went to see the old Countess to find out if she wanted to write anything to the lord Count her son. She said she did not, "but if anyone asks you, say that you did not speak to me because you were in such a hurry." She had the letter he was taking secretly removed, and gave him another which reported that the young Countess had carried and given birth to a monster which had no hands, the face of a dog and the body of a human.

When the Count received the letter, at first he crossed himself and felt worried, but then he wrote back to say they should take care of his wife and the monster. The messenger returned again to the old Countess, because of the warm welcome she had given him. She had his letter taken away again, without his knowledge, and replaced it with a false letter. It said that the Count of Provence ordered his officers, as soon as they saw this letter, to deliver the country by the death of his wife and son, and that he was very sorry that he had taken her as his wife, since she had no hands and since it was most displeasing to his lady mother and to all his fiends.

When the lords and officers of the country had seen and heard this letter, they said that they would not put them to death, but would send Fleurie and her son, out to sea to take their chances in a boat, and would leave it to God to decide; for they thought her perfectly virtuous and beautiful. She was put into a boat and arrived, as it pleased God, in a place where there were charitable nuns of good repute. When they knew that she had come, they went to see her, and asked her where she was going and who had brought her there. "The grace of God," she replied, and asked them to welcome her in their convent, out of charity; they did so willingly.

When the Count had learned all about his wife and knew that she had told him the truth, he returned to his country expecting to find his wife. When he learned what had been to her, he almost fell into despair. Then he sent for his mother, who confessed the truth to him. When she had confessed the truth and acknowledged her treason, he condemned her to die shamefully, and swore that he would never rest until he had found his wife. He travelled through many lands, but he could never hear any news of her, but endured great troubles in his attempt to find her. It happened that as the Count was returning to his country by sea, he heard the bells of the convent where his wife was staying. He went in that direction. As he arrived, his wife was hearing mass most devoutly, as was her custom. When the priest who was celebrating mass was about to say the *Agnus Dei*, and when he had taken the worthy and holy sacrament, the clerk who was helping him was forced to leave because of a flux in the stomach and didn't return in time. The priest had no one who could or was willing to help him serve the host. Fleurie, who was hearing mass, stepped forth, moved by good will; she thought she would come and help the priest serve; but she could not do as she wanted because she had no hands, but she tired very hard. Therefore, when God saw and recognized her good will and intentions, He performed a great miracle for Fleurie, for He gave her back her hands; she gave thanks and praise to our Lord Jesus Christ. And when the priest

saw this, after he had praised God by singing mass, he had the bells rung, so much that the ladies came running; when they saw the obvious miracle, they praised God for it devoutly.

When the Count had come in, he was well received and honoured. When he had made his prayers, the nuns prayed him to take some food, and he agreed gracefully. Then, when he had dined and given thanks to God, he began to tell them about his voyage and what had inspired him to undertake it, and how he had not found what he was searching for. As he was telling them his story, his and Lady Fleurie's son, little Lamorad, who was already six years old, a beautiful and attractive child, sat on the Count's lap and made friends with him. The Count smiled and said, "God bless you, you are a pretty child." And he looked very intently at the nuns, so the abbess said to him, "My lord, what is it that makes you laugh and look at us so intently one after the other? Certainly it seems to me that you have some wicked suspicions."

"That is true," said the Count, "but I won't say them to you."

"I believe," said the abbess, "that you think this child belongs to one of us."

"You have guessed very well," said the Count. Then the abbess told him that the child belonged to a young woman she was caring for, out of love for God, and that when she came there she had no hands, but her appearance and behaviour showed that she was descended from nobility. And today as she was hearing mass, God had returned her hands to her by a miracle, and she had been returned to health.

When the Count heard this story, he praised God in his heart and recognized clearly that it was his wife, and asked to be taken to her. When he knew her and she him, they embraced each other with great love.

The Count stayed there with her and his son for two weeks, during which time he sent word back home, and made generous donations to the convent. Then he took his wife and his son Lamorad back to Provence and treated her most grandly.

He informed her father Alexander of the whole situation; he came to visit them, and then took them back to Hungary and turned over all his kingdom to them, for he was very old. To win salvation, he became a monk and lived a very holy life.

The King—the former Count of Provence—and his wife reigned for a long time with great joy, honour and nobility. Then they died in God. Lamorad, their son, reigned after them, bringing prosperity to his country and defending Christianity. And he died as a knight errant.

The Two Married Women and the Widow

WILLIAM DUNBAR

Scots, ca. 1500

On Midsummer's Eve, the merriest of nights, I went out alone, just after midnight, beside a fine green garden full of gay flowers and hedged to a great height with hawthorn trees. A bird on a bough poured out her songs: no more joyous bird was ever heard on a branch. With the sugary sound of its glad song and the healing scent of the sweet flowers, I secretly approached the wall to lie hidden and overhear entertainments. The dew moistened the dale, and the birds were clamouring.

Under a holly tree of heavenly green colour, I heard loud conversation in haughty language, and quickly thrust my way into the hedge, so forcefully that I was concealed by the hawthorn and by sheltering leaves. Soon I peeked through the spikes of the tangled thorn to see if anyone would come near, in that pleasant garden.

I saw three gay ladies sitting in a green arbour, all adorned with garlands of fine fresh flowers. Their glorious golden tresses shone like gold wire, while all the grasses gleamed with cheerful colours. Their bright hair was combed out and elegantly spread all over their shoulders, shining very brightly, with head-dresses of delicate clear material arranged above. Their mantles were as green as the grass that grew in May, and were held tight about their lovely bodies by their white fingers. Their gentle faces were marvellously pretty, full of flourishing beauty, like flowers in June. They were as white and soft and beautiful as sweet lilies spread open on their stems, or as the new-opened rose; they were royally arrayed with rich greenery which Nature nobly enamelled with flowers of every hue under heaven that any courteous person ever knew—fragrant, filled full of fresh scent, finest of smell.

A pretty table was spread before those fair ladies, with rows of royal goblets full of rich wines. Two of these lovely creatures were married to husbands, and one was a widow, indeed, of wanton habits. As they talked at the table, on a number of subjects, they quaffed the strong wine and poured out words; but afterwards they spoke more to the purpose and no subject was avoided.

"Tell me," said the Widow, "you young married women, what enjoyment have you found in marriage since you became men's wives? Have you ever repented that thoughtless contract? Have you ever loved any living man more than those to whom you have pledged your faith forever? If you had the choice, do you think you would choose better? Do you not think it blessed, this bond which binds so fast that nothing can loosen it at all except death itself?"

Then at once one gay creature spoke up spiritedly: "What you call the blessed bond that binds so fast is empty of happiness and wretched, and stirs up much strife. You ask if I would choose better if I had free choice? Chains are always to be avoided, and changes are sweet! If I had my choice to avoid so cursed a lot, I would escape for ever from the chains of a churl. Would to God that marriage were made for just one year's copulating! It's only a nuisance for it to last longer, unless it pleases our minds. It is against the law of love, of humanity and of Nature, to force together hearts which are in conflict with each other. Birds have a better law by far than men: each year with new joy, they enjoy a mate, and take a fresh companion, constant and energetic, and let their worn-out companions fly wherever they please. Would to Christ that such a custom were followed in this country! It would be a good thing for us women to always be free. We would have new mates to take whenever it pleased us and to send the impotent ones packing when their vigour failed them. I myself would be dressed most stylishly in silks, graceful, attractive and beautiful, most cheerful and elegant. I would be found at fairs in order to see new faces; at plays and preachings and pilgrimages, in order to display my qualities royally where there were gatherings of people, to show off my elegance to a multitude of people and to advertise my beauty in places where there were many good men, so that I could choose and be chosen—and change when I pleased. Then from all this wide realm I would pick out the best to possess my womanhood through the long winter nights. When I had a man, the fittest of all, active and young, to pull in the yoke for a year, after I had tested his vigour for the first pleasant month, I would start looking about in the church and the market, and all around the country, in the King's court and in other places where I might get me a gallant man for the next year, one who could still perform when the other one failed; someone bold in the furrow and always eager and ready for the task, not feeble or faint or listless in labour, but as fresh in his form as flowers in May. For I would take all the fruit, even though he put forth the flower buds!

"My husband is a sluggard, a worm, an old caterpillar, a worn-out boar, good for nothing but babbling; a lazy drone, a bag full of phlegm; a scabby monster, a scorpion, a shit-ass. To see him scratching his own skin disgusts me! When he kisses me, that monster, my misery is aroused. His beard is as stiff as the bristles of a fierce boar, but his sorry tool is as soft and supple as silk; he can give assent to the sin, but his acts are innocent! His two grim eyes are ringed with slime and encrusted like two gutters clogged with filth. But when that glowering ghost takes me in his grip, then I think that hideous Mahound holds me in his arms! Making the sign of the cross cannot save me from that old Satan, for though I cross myself all over, from the top of the head down, he embraces my whole body and hugs me to his breast. When the old churl is shaved with a sharp razor, he shoves his crooked mouth against mine and defiles my lips; and with his rough hedgehog skin he scratches my cheeks so that my jaws glow like red-hot coals. I shrink from the sharp pain, but I don't dare cry out because of the old wretch's threats, may shame befall him! The love leers of that hobgoblin from his bleary eyes

make my spirits sink as if Beelzebub had looked at me. And when the scoundrel smirks at me with his rogue's muzzle, he dribbles like a glandered cart-horse leering at a mare.

"When the sound of his voice sinks into my ears, my distress always arises anew, even before he comes near me. When I hear his name mentioned, I cross myself nine times, to protect myself from the annoyance of that crazed fool who is full of jealousy and anger and all evil qualities. I don't even dare look at my sweetheart because of that scrawny tomcat, he is so full of jealousy and false ingenuity, always imagining malicious things, contriving and devising thousands of tricks to catch me keeping a rendezvous with another man. I don't dare glance at the lad who fills my cup, because of the jealousy of that old shrew, whose mind is always on evil because he is wasted and worn-out by the work of Venus: what he provides for my needs in bed is not worth a bean! He thinks I eagerly repay young folk because he is impotent, but I could itch for it all year long before his rod would be any help!

"Every time that monster wants to climb on my belly, I am disdainful and haughty and unwilling; yet I never let that impotent creature get between my legs to soil my flesh or fumble with me except for a high price. His prick pays me poorly in bed, but his purse pays richly in compensation afterwards! For before that useless monster climbs on my body, I make a contract for a head-dress of the very finest fabric, a gown of scarlet cloth, charmingly trimmed with fur, a ring with a royal stone, or some other rich jewel; otherwise he can stop his clumsy assault, though he goes stark mad because of it! Yet for all the bribes of John Blunt, when he climbs on top, it seems an expensive interval, so feeble is his performance. And thus I sell him comfort—cold comfort I think! May God save you from such a master, my dear sweet sisters!"

When that fair one had made her speech, they all laughed out loud in the merriest way, and passed round the cup, full of rich wines, and joked for a long time with riotous speech before they rested.

The widow addressed these words to the second lovely lady: "Now, fair sister, it is your turn to tell us, without pretence: how have you fared, by your faith, since you were first united in matrimony in church? Confess the truth to us. To bless or to curse that bond: which seems to you best? How do you like leading a life as a faithful spouse? Afterwards you may examine me in the same way, and I will tell you the truth, with no word of a lie."

"I declare," answered the amiable woman, "that if I am to admit the truth, your tongues must be trustworthy." The other two agreed, and her spirits rose higher by a span. "I will not hold back my speech," said she. "There is no spy near. I will unfold a catalogue that comes from the bottom of my heart, a disturbance that rankles me so much that it makes my stomach turn. Now the boil that has been oozing for so long will burst: it was too heavy a burden to bear in my breast! I will give cast out the poisonous discharge and relieve myself of a swelling which has swelled so large.

"My husband was the greatest whore-master on earth, and so I hate him with all my heart, so help me God! He is a young man, nimble enough, but no longer in the flower of youth, for he has faded away and his strength has become feeble. A few years ago he was fresh and flourishing, but now he has declined, and is worn out by his efforts. He has been lecherous so long that he has lost his virility. His tool has grown flabby and lies in a swoon; rest was never more pointlessly prescribed than for that tired snail, for after seven weeks' rest it still won't knock once. He had exhausted himself with other women before he chose me as his wife, and, in my time, I have often caught him in adultery. And yet he prances about proudly with his hat at a tilt, making eyes at the prettiest girls that live in the town; he is as courtly in his clothing and the combing of his hair as one who is more valiant in the chamber of Venus! He gives the appearance of being worth something, that zero in the bedroom! He looks as if he wants to be loved, but he is short on valour. He acts like a stupid dog sprinkling on every bush and lifting up his leg though he has no need to piss. He has a glance without desire and life without vigour; a fair shape without force and appearances without the strength; fair words without effects, quite impotent in action. He puts up a lusty show for the ladies, but in private, when it comes to the deed he will be caught drooping. He is always boasting with riotous language, praising himself for his forays and prowess in the bedroom, but God knows what I think when he talks so boldly and how well it suits him so to declaim so proudly on such subjects, unless one evening he would have a go at one of them; but he is not such a one, oh no, not one of those who possess sexual power.

"She who is married to an old man is not completely defrauded: he is no worse than he seems to be at the work of Venus. I thought I had chosen a gem, but I have got paste; he had the glitter of gold but he has proved to be nothing but glass. Though men are fierce, I find that after their manhood fails, there is only jealousy or anger in their hearts. You speak about birds on the branch: they may well sing of their bliss, who are free each year on St. Valentine's day. If I had that delightful privilege, to separate when it pleased me, to change and always to be able to choose again, then Chastity, adieu! Then I would have a fresh companion to take in my arms: to keep a fellow until he grows feeble may surely be called folly. I often muse about such things at midnight and grieve so much that I torment myself. I lie sleepless for grief and toss around and often curse my wicked kinsmen who cast me away and married my fresh beauty to such a powerless coward when there were so many bold knights within this kingdom. Then I think about someone, to tell the truth, at least seven times as attractive as his lordship, and with that I often sigh. He turns his useless body towards me very tenderly and, with an exhausted member, he yokes me in his arms and says: 'My sovereign sweet thing, why don't you sleep better? It seems to me that you have a touch of fever, as if you some pain ailed you.' 'My honey,' I answer, 'hold back and don't handle me roughly; a sudden ache has struck me deep in my heart.' With that I pretend to faint, though I am not subject to swooning. In this way I deceive the fellow with my sweet words: I give him a dirty look

when daylight comes and pretend it is a love glance when he looks back; I turn what I expended in anger into a tender gaze and look at him intimately with a heartfelt smile.

"I wish one of those delicate little girls who can't endure the thrust, and hate men with hard gear because they hurt the flesh, could have my good man as her lover! I swear to God, she wouldn't flinch a straw's-breadth on account of his stroke. And after that, I would wish that the same bond you call so blessed would bind him to that fair one while his back heaved; if I were brought to bed with a man who pleased me, I am sure that such a girl would not be able to mock at my pleasure."

As soon as this amiable woman had ended her speech, the others, laughing loudly, commended her highly. Those merry wives made sport among the green leaves; they drank and they cast away sorrow under the dark branches; they tossed back the sweet wine, those swan-white ladies; but they spoke up all the more impudently and plainly.

Then the Widow said: "Indeed there is no other way: now it falls to me to talk, my tale comes next. May God inspire my spirit, enliven my speech and send me noble and substantial opinions to relate, so that my preaching may pierce your obstinate hearts and make you meeker to men in your actions and in your dispositions. I reveal to you, my sisters in confession, that I have always been a shrew, but I was lovely in my clothing and appeared to be innocent. Though I was stubborn, haughty, cruel and bold, I dissembled so cunningly that I looked like a saint. I seemed meek, and sweet, and simple, and free from fraud, though I could deceive sixty who were believed to be more clever.

"Now hearken to my sermon and learn sense from me: if you don't want to be abandoned by faithless flatterers, be constant in your behaviour and counterfeit proper demeanour, although you are really sharp, inconstant and cruel-minded. Though you are as fierce as tigers, be tractable in love; be like turtle-doves in your talk, though you have wanton tails; be both dragon and dove, of a double nature, and use both their strengths when you have the need; be amiable and look as humble as angels, and sting like adders with a terrible tail; be innocent in your appearance, though you have evil minds; always wear courtly and costly clothes—that causes you no pain, since your husband pays for everything.

"I have had two husbands, and they both loved me dearly; although I despised them in return, they did not suspect it. One was a hoary old codger who coughed up phlegm. I hated him like a dog, though I kept it secret, and with kissing and fondling I made the man play the fool. Well did I know how to scratch his crooked back and comb his cropped noddle, while with my tongue in my cheek I made faces behind him, and with a curtsey came round and pulled the wool over his old eyes, and with a kindly expression kissed his shrivelled cheeks. In my mind I mocked that mad father who trusted me to treat him kindly with true love. I could do this without trouble and no hardship; I was always able to be cheerful in spirit and full of mirth.

"I had a more lovable man to slake my lust who knew how to be secret and reliable and always protect my reputation, and to meet me only at certain times and in safe places. When my old man angered me with his ill-tempered talk, gazing at my gallant lover made me happy again. I was smart enough to weep little for grief, but I always let the sweet balance the sour for a proper flavour. Whenever the brute wanted to scold me, grimacing with his jaws, I would tickle his chin and cheeks and jolly him up so that he assigned his chief mansions to my son, even though the churl had become chaste before that child was begotten. I always acted as a wise woman and not as a mad fool, for I gained more by my wiles than by strength of my hands.

"Then I married a merchant, well-provided with goods. He was a middle-aged man and of low stature. But we were not a match either in kindred or class, in generosity, conduct, or fair appearance—which the fool always forgot, because of lack of understanding. But I reminded him so often that his heart grew angry, and sometimes I would unleash my tongue and call him a peddler. I used to talk—with the greatest affection, of course—about being twice married, for my innocence had ended with my first husband. I gave signs of sauciness even before I was fully of age—so says the curate of our church, who knew me when I was quite young: he is notorious for his falsehoods, that fair worthy prelate, and I won't let him lie about me as long as I can still get around....

Well, I made that shop-keeper obey me: he had no remedy. He treated me with the greatest reverence once he understood my rights. Though I say so myself, there was a great difference between his bastard blood and my noble birth. That lackey would never have been worthy to presume to be an equal of mine, had my pity not allowed it. But mercy is a great virtue in womankind, and compassion is engendered only in noble hearts. I always kept it fresh in his mind that I married him as an act of grace, and so that he would know his place I courteously taught him. He didn't dare disregard my summons, for he was always ready to run before the second command, since he was so terrified of my rebukes. But my will was always the worse for my womanly nature; the more he humbled himself for my love, the less I thought of him. And also—this is a marvellous thing—before I was engaged to him I had quite a good will toward the fellow, but afterwards everlasting hostility.

"When I had the control of everything, and he was completely defeated, I crowed over that coward like a cock when it is victorious. When I saw him submissive and obedient to my commands, then I despised him as a loon and loathed his habits. I grew so merciless that I made plans to torment him. I goaded him like a beast to every kind of menial task: I would have ridden him to Rome with a rope on his head, were it not for the harm to my reputation and the way people gossip. And yet I hid all my hatred in my heart, though sometimes it heaped up so much that it was forced out. I never took the stopper out of my wide throat as long as I lacked anything I wanted or desired. When I had deprived that man of his worldly goods and had his buildings and his tall

city tenements for my child, the stopper flew out of my throat with a stink, and he was stunned by the pain as if by a steel weapon. Then, after so long a delay, I was so eager to be avenged that I was as fierce in scolding as a ferocious dragon. I had been pretending so long in order to flatter the fool, until my deeds of ownership were all sealed; my breast was so inflamed and swollen that my rage nearly burst forth before the contract was complete. But when my bills and documents were all plainly sealed, I would no longer respond to the bridle, but reared up my head; no muzzle could make me meek or control my mouth. I made the reins stretch and snap asunder. I put that pansy to work at women's tasks, and made him abandon all manly affairs and all earthly dignity. Then I would say to my cronies: 'Look how I tied up that colt with a tight bridle; the horse that bucked off his baskets on the trash heap now pulls the cart politely and wouldn't thinks of rearing! It isn't skittish or restless and doesn't skip to one side.' And this way he escaped neither scorn nor injury.

"He was no pleasant lover for a gay lady, so I found him a game that repaid him better. He was a very wealthy man and rich in goods, so I let him be my banker, to free me from all my business affairs. He was glad to accept that fine office from me, and expected to win my favours by many gifts. He clothed me in gay silk and choice garments, in gowns of scarlet cloth and great golden chains, in rings royally set with rich rubies, until my reputation rose high among the common people. But I very craftily put that courtly clothing away until the death of that feeble fellow, who was useless in the bedroom. Though he paid all the cost and expense of my clothes, someone else who enjoys me later will have the profit from it. And though I had little liking for him, yet for the love of other men, I would adorn myself pleasantly in costly clothes so that lovers would gaze at me, and lusty young gallants, whom I found more attractive and dearer by far than him who dressed me so daintily; he really was quite senile! When he had been plundered out of hand to increase my honours and painted me like a peacock in the proudest of feathers, I neglected him, by Christ, and I made him a cuckold. I rejected him as if he were a servant and loathed him. I thought myself a popinjay and him a plucked heron. And so he reinforced his foe and built up her power, and made a sturdy stick to strike himself down.

"But I have to tell you a joke about bed! When he had held back for a whole year and felt the need to play, I was loath to be leaped by such a loutish nag. As long as he was on top, I never once looked at him, and never let it enter my mind that it was he who was piercing my thing, but I always pictured in my mind that it was another man I had there: otherwise I would have had no pleasure from that joyless assault. When I had gelded that fellow of his goods and his manly vigour, so help me God, I found him repulsive to look at. When he had squandered his wealth and his property, all on me, it seemed to me that his understanding had gone away with all the rest. And so I despised him, and I spat when I saw that bankrupt evil spirit, despoiled of all strength. For you women know well that the man who lacks riches and valour in the play of Venus is thought to

be absolutely loathsome: his fresh array and his handsome appearance are useless and all his efforts are fruitless if he fails at the climax.

"I dressed my children like a baron's sons, and made fools of the fry of his first wife. I banished every one of his brothers from my bounds, and I always held his friends in hatred, as my foes; by this you may believe I had no love for the man himself, for I never liked any person who belonged to his blood. And yet those wise men, they believe all evil wives are known by their dispositions and can be recognized for what they are by them!

"That bankrupt is dead now and buried in the ground; with him all my grief and my dreary thoughts died; my dismal night has ended, my day has dawned! Adieu, sorrow, adieu! Now my delights begin. Now I am a widow indeed, and I am well pleased. I weep as if I were full of woe, but now I am happy forever. I dress as if I were miserable, but my heart is happy; my mouth expresses sorrow, but my mind is laughing; my cloaks are full of misery with their dark colour, but underneath my body is beautiful. I droop with a deathly look in my mourning clothes as though I were through with sex for all the days of my life.

"When I go to church, dressed in mourning, I disguise my expression, like a fox in a lamb's fleece; then I spread my beautiful book wide open on my knee with many beautiful letters illuminated in gold, and draw my cloak forward over my white face so that I can spy all around me unseen. I often glance away from my book, and stop my devotions to see who is the most muscular man with the broadest shoulders, or built the most powerfully to furnish a banquet in the chamber of Venus, valiantly and without empty boasting. Just as the pale new moon, afflicted by change, sometimes shows her bright face through dark clouds, so I peep out through my cloak and cast kind glances at knights and clerics and courtly people.

"When my husband's friends see me from afar, I keep a wet sponge for grief inside my wide cloak, and squeeze it cunningly and wet my cheeks: with that, my eyes water and tears roll down. Then all those who are sitting around say: 'Alas, do you not see that miserable creature—she loved her husband so faithfully! It is enough to bring pity to a prince's heart, that such a pearl of delight should endure such suffering!' I cross myself as if I were a saint and look like an angel; I act offended if I hear lecherous language. I sigh, with no sadness in my heart and no sickness in my body. I have to behave sorrowfully in accordance with my dark weeds, or else they will see the real truth; for certainly we women undertake to beguile men from seeing the truth. We never mourn for an evil deed—as long as it is kept hidden.

"Wise women have ways and wonderful patterns for deceiving their jealous husbands with great guile; and we manage our affairs so quietly and so craftily that no creature under Christ knows what we are doing. But people may cook a dish badly if they lack knowledge and have no devices to cover their own natural flaws. This is the case with those damsels who, for foolish concealed love, value worthless fellows and

consort with them so long that the whole country knows about their kindness and faithfulness. Faith has a fair name, but falsehood fares better. Fie on her who can't pretend in order to save her good name! But I am wise at such work, and have always been so. Though I may lack wisdom in worldly affairs, I have the same wiles in love as any fortunate woman of high blood. May the guileless hundred-year old maiden always be a joke!

"I have a quiet servant who is careful with his tongue and who supports for me in such needs when I give him a sign. Though he may be simple to look at, he has a sure tongue. Many a handsomer man performs his service worse. Though I suffer trouble in my cloak all the bright day till nightfall, still I have solace in my slip until the rising of the sun. Still I am considered a pious woman throughout the whole shire: I am so compassionate to the poor when many people are present. I pride myself on going on pilgrimages—but more because of the crowds of people than to win any pardon.

"Yet the best sport seems to me when barons and knights and other happy bachelors, in the bloom of youth, and all my loyal lovers throng to my house and pour wine wantonly for me, with jollity and merriment. One whispers, another jokes, and another reads poems; one declaims loudly with riotous talk; one makes complaints and another pleads; one praises my beauty; one kisses me, another fondles me; one offers me favours; one carves for me courteously; one hands me my cup; and another, with strong desire, comes forward boldly and thrusts a stiff, standing thing into my fist. And many who sit far outside peek inside, and cannot prosper as well as they want because of the large crowd. But with my fair welcome, I comfort them all. If a man sits beside me, I give his finger a nip, and serve the one on the other side in the same way; and if one sits behind me, I lean hard on him, and if one sits in front of me I press my foot on his firmly; to those who sit out in the outer room, I send sweet glances. And I speak a few words to each man personally, so wisely and so womanly that it warms their hearts.

"There is no man living of such low status that he could love me and not be loved back, I am so warm-hearted. And if his desire is inclined toward my fair face and he would perish if he doesn't play with me, his life will be in no danger. I am so merciful and I take pity on all men so much that my innocent soul will be safe when the Lord judges all.

"Ladies, learn these lessons and don't prove to be ignorant girls. This is the legend of my life, even though it is not in Latin."

When this eloquent widow had finished her elegant speech, the others laughed loudly, praised her highly, and said they would take example from her sovereign teaching and act as she had said, since she was such a prudent woman. Then they cooled their mouths with comforting drinks, and chatted casually as the cup went round.

So they finished the pleasant night with noble dances, until the day dawned and the dew moistened the flowers. The morning was mild and the thrush sang sweetly; the mist had cleared and the meadow was fragrant. Silver showers fell down like clear

crystal, and birds shouted in the woods with their shrill notes. The golden, glittering sunshine gladdened their hearts so much that they made glorious music among the green boughs. The soft murmuring in the valley and the sound of the streams, the sweet smell of the meadow and the singing of birds could comfort any creature of Adam's race and rekindle his virility even if it were quenched and cold.

Then those royal roses in their rich clothes arose and went home to their rest through the brushwood blossoms, and I made my way secretly to a pleasant arbour and with my pen recorded their merry pastimes.

Most honoured listeners, who have given ear to this strange adventure that happened to me early one morning: of the three wanton women I have written about, which would you choose as your wife, if you had to marry one?

"Florida and Amador"

from *The Heptameron*

MARGUERITE OF NAVARRE

French, mid-16th century

In the County of Aranda in Aragon, there was a lady who, while still very young, had been left a widow by the Count of Aranda; she had one son, and one daughter, who was named Florida. This lady made every effort to raise her children in all the virtues and good qualities which are appropriate to lords and gentle people, so that her house had the reputation of being one of the most honourable in all Spain. She often went to Toledo, where the King of Spain was in residence; when she came to Saragossa, which was near her own house, she used to remain a long time at court with the Queen, where she was as highly esteemed as any lady could be.

Once when she was making a customary visit to the King, who was then in Saragossa in the Castle of the Aljaferia, this lady passed through a village which belonged to the Viceroy of Catalonia. Normally, the Viceroy never went far from the borders of Perpignan because of the wars between the Kings of France and Spain, but at that time there was peace, and he and all his captains had come to pay their respects to the King. When the Viceroy learned that the Countess of Aranda was passing through his lands, he went to meet her, both because of the friendship he had long felt for her and in order to honour her as a relative of the King's. He was accompanied by several fine gentlemen who had acquired so much glory and fame through their long experience of war that everyone who could enjoy their company felt very fortunate. Among them there was one named Amador, who, although he was only eighteen or nineteen years old, had such an air of assurance and such good judgment that he would have been chosen from a thousand as worthy of governing a state. It is true that this good sense was accompanied by such great natural beauty that every eye was pleased to gaze upon him; and if his beauty was exquisite, his conversation matched it so well that it was hard to know whether to give the greatest honour to his grace, to his beauty or to his eloquence. But what won him most esteem was his great boldness, whose fame was in no way impeded by his youth. He had already showed what he was capable of doing on so many occasions that not only Spain, but France and Italy as well, valued his virtues highly, for in all the wars in which he had been engaged he had never spared himself. When his own land was at peace, he went to foreign countries in search of war, where he was loved and respected by friends and enemies alike.

This gentleman, because of his admiration for his captain, found himself in the region where the Countess of Aranda had arrived. As he considered the beauty of her

daughter Florida, who was then only twelve years old, he thought to himself that she was surely the finest person he had ever seen, and that if he could gain her favour he would be better satisfied than if he had all the possessions and all the pleasures he could receive from any other woman. After observing her for a long time, he decided that he would love her, no matter what insurmountable obstacles reason placed in his way, whether because of her noble family or because of her age—since she was not yet able to entertain such proposals. In opposition to this fear he fortified himself with a resolute hope, promising himself that time and patience would bring a happy conclusion to all his toils.

From that time on, the noble love that had entered Amador's heart, without any cause other than its own strength, promised to give him every favour and the means to attain them. To overcome the greatest obstacle—the great distance of the country where he resided and his lack of opportunities to see Florida again—he decided to marry; this was quite contrary to what he had resolved when he was with the ladies in Barcelona and Perpignan, where he was held in such favour that little or nothing was ever refused to him. He had lived so long in those regions because of the wars that he seemed more Catalan than Castilian, although he was born near Toledo, of a wealthy and distinguished family; but as he was a younger son, he had no inheritance. So it was that Love and Fortune, seeing him neglected by his parents, decided to make him their masterpiece, and gave him through his valour what the laws of the country denied him. He was thoroughly acquainted with the arts of war and so respected by lords and princes that he more often refused their favours than he had need to request them.

The Countess I have been telling you about also arrived in Saragossa, and was graciously received by the King and all his court. The Governor of Catalonia came to visit her frequently, and Amador never failed to accompany him, simply for the chance to see Florida, for he had no opportunity to speak to her. In order to make himself known in such good company, he approached Aventurada, the daughter of an old knight who was his neighbour. She was so familiar with Florida that she knew everything that was hidden in her heart. Amador, as much for the good qualities that he found in her as because she had a dowry of three thousand ducats a year in rents, decided to conduct himself with Aventurada as a man who was seeking marriage.

She listened to him with pleasure; but since he was poor, she thought that her rich father would never consent to the marriage except through the intervention of the Countess of Aranda. So she addressed herself to Florida, and said to her, "My lady, you are aware of the Castilian gentleman who speaks to me so often; I believe that his whole purpose is to take me in marriage. You know what kind of father I have: he will never consent to it unless he is encouraged very strongly by both the Countess and yourself." Florida, who loved this young lady as much as herself, assured her that she would take this business to heart as if it were her own.

And so Aventurada went so far as to present Amador to Florida, and when he kissed her hand her hand he thought he would faint for joy: he was considered the most eloquent man in all Spain, but he became mute in Florida's presence. She was very surprised by this, for although she was only twelve years old, she had already heard that there was no man in Spain able to speak his mind more readily or with more grace. Seeing then that he did not utter a word to her, she began to speak: "The fame that you have throughout all the kingdoms of Spain, Sir Amador, is such that it makes you well known in this company and causes all who know you to wish to undertake to please you. Therefore, if I can do anything for you in any regard, you may surely make use of me."

As Amador gazed on his lady's beauty, he was so captivated that he could hardly say thank you. Although Florida was surprised to see him still unable to reply, she attributed it to some whim, not to the power of love, and passed by without saying any more.

Amador, recognizing the great virtue that was beginning to show itself in Florida despite her youth, said to the woman he wished to marry, "Do not be surprised that I was unable to speak in the presence of Lady Florida; the virtues and the wisdom which are hidden by her extreme youth astonished me so much that I didn't know what to say to her. But I beg you, Aventurada, since you know her secrets, to tell me if it is possible that she does not possess the hearts of all the gentlemen of this court: those who know her and do not love her must be stones or senseless brutes!"

Aventurada, who already loved Amador more than any man in the world, could not conceal anything from him; she told him that Lady Florida was loved by everyone, but that, because of the custom of the country, few people spoke with her. She had not yet seen anyone who had made any attempts, except for two young Spanish princes who wished to marry her. One was the son of the Fortunate Infante, and the other was the young Duke of Cardona.

"Tell me, I pray you," said Amador, "which of the two do you think she prefers?"

"She is so prudent," said Aventurada, "that she would never admit to having any wish different from her mother's. Still, as far as we can judge, she much prefers the son of the Fortunate Infante to the young Duke of Cardona. But her mother, to keep her nearer to home, would prefer her to be at Cardona. But I consider you to be a man of such good judgment that, if you wanted, you could determine the truth yourself, this very day; the son of the Fortunate Infante is being raised at this court, and is one of the handsomest and most accomplished young princes in Christendom. If the marriage were to be decided by the opinions of us maidens, he would be sure to have my lady Florida, so as to see the most charming couple in all Spain united. You must understand that although they are both very young—she is only twelve and he fifteen—this love began three years ago. If you wish to be in her favour, I advise you to become his friend and servant."

Amador was very pleased to see that his lady was in love with something, hoping that in the long run he would attain the place not of husband but of servant; because of her virtue his only fear had been that she might not love at all. After this conversation, Amador began to cultivate the son of the Fortunate Infante, and gained his good will readily, since he was an expert in all the diversions which the young prince enjoyed. Above all, he was a good horseman, skilled in all feats of arms and in all the sports and games which a young gentleman ought to know.

The war broke out again in Languedoc, and it was necessary for Amador to return with the governor; but it was not without great regret, for there was no way to return to a place where he could see Florida. On that account, before his departure he spoke to one of his brothers, who was the major-domo to the Queen of Spain. He told him about the good match he had found with Lady Aventurada in the Countess of Aranda's household, and begged him to do all that he could during his absence so that the marriage would come to pass, making use of the influence of the Queen, the King, and all his friends. This gentleman, who loved his brother Amador not only because of kinship but also for his great prowess, promised him that he would do all he could about it. And so he did, so well that Aventurada's miserly old father forgot his natural inclinations and paid some regard to Amador's virtues as they were vividly painted for him by the Countess of Aranda and especially by the beautiful Florida—and by the young Count of Aranda as well, who was beginning, as he grew up, to love people of merit. When the marriage agreements had been settled by the relatives, the Queen's major-domo sent for his brother to return to Spain for the duration of a truce between the two kings.

About that time the King of Spain withdrew to Madrid, to avoid the unhealthy air which prevailed in several places. On the advice of his council and at the request of the Countess of Aranda he gave permission for the marriage of the heiress-Duchess of Medinaceli with the young Count of Aranda, as much for the prosperity and union of their houses as because of his love for the Countess of Aranda; he chose to have the wedding celebrated in the castle of Madrid.

Amador was present at the wedding, and followed his own interests so successfully that he married the woman in whom he had inspired more love than he felt for her: but this marriage was a propitious screen and pretext for frequenting the place where his spirit dwelled incessantly.

After he was married he became so bold and so familiar in the household of the Countess of Aranda that no one paid any more heed to him than if he had been a woman. Although at the time he was only twenty-two years old, he was so prudent that the Countess of Aranda communicated all her affairs to him, and ordered her son and her daughter to converse with him and follow his advice in everything. Having reached this high point in their esteem, he conducted himself so discreetly and coolly that even the one he loved never suspected his affection. Because of her affection for Amador's

wife, whom she loved more than any other woman, Florida was so confident in him that she concealed none of her thoughts from him, and even took the opportunity to tell him about the love she felt for the son of the Fortunate Infante. Amador, who wanted only to win her completely, talked to her constantly about the young prince; he did not care what subject he spoke to her about, provided he had a way to keep her in a long conversation. He stayed in that company only a month after his marriage, because he was required to return to the war; he stayed away more than two years without returning to his wife, who all the while continued to reside where she had been brought up.

During this time, Amador wrote to Aventurada often, but his letters were made up for the most part of messages to Florida, who on her side did not fail to return them, adding some pleasant piece of wit in her own hand in the letters that Aventurada was writing; this was sufficient to make the husband quite diligent in writing back to his wife. But in all this Florida knew only that she loved him as if he were her own brother. Amador came and went several times, but during five years he did not see Florida more than two months altogether. Nevertheless, in spite of distance and long absence, love did not cease to grow.

It happened that he made a journey to visit his wife and found that the Countess was far away from the court. The King had gone to Andalusia, and had taken with him the young Count of Aranda, who had already begun to bear arms. The Countess had returned to a country-house she owned on the border of Aragon and Navarre, and was very pleased when she saw Amador returning, for he had been away for nearly three years. He was welcomed by everyone, and the Countess commanded that he should be treated as if he were her own son. While he was with her, she reported all the affairs of her household to him, and followed his advice for the most part. He gained such credit in the house that doors were opened for him wherever he wished to go, for his prudence was valued so highly that he was trusted in all matters as if he were a saint or an angel.

Because of her love for Aventurada and for him, Florida sought him out wherever she saw him. She had no doubts about his intentions, and so she was not at all on her guard and showed no reserve. Her heart experienced no emotion, except that she felt great contentment when she was with him: she had no thought of anything more. Amador, however, took great pains to avoid the suspicions of those who, from experience, could recognize the gaze of lovers. When Florida came to speak privately with him, not thinking anything wrong, the flame hidden in his heart blazed up so violently that he could not prevent the colour from rising to his cheeks or sparks from escaping from his eyes.

In order that no one might guess his feelings because of his frequent attendance, he began to keep company with a very beautiful lady named Paulina, a woman who at the time was considered so lovely that few men who saw her escaped her fascinations. Paulina, having heard how Amador had made love in Barcelona and Perpignan and that

he was loved by the most beautiful and noblest ladies in the country—especially by the Countess of Palamos, who was considered the most beautiful woman in Spain and several other countries—told him that she pitied him for having, after so many good fortunes, married such an ugly wife. Amador, understanding by these words that she was willing to remedy the situation, talked to her in the most encouraging terms possible, thinking that by making her believe a lie he could conceal the truth from her. Since she was experienced in love, she was not content with mere words; nevertheless, plainly perceiving that his heart was not satisfied with this love, she suspected that he wanted to use her as a cover. With this suspicion in her mind, she watched him so closely that no glance of his eyes escaped her; but he was so able to pretend that she could judge only by vague conjecture.

This could not continue without great difficulty for the gentleman, because Florida, unaware of all these machinations, spoke to him so intimately in Paulina's presence that it cost him extreme effort to prevent his eyes from following the movements of his heart. To prevent disagreeable consequences, one day, as he was speaking with Florida by a window, he said to her, "My dear, I pray you to advise me whether it is better to speak or to die?"

Florida replied at once: "I will always advise my friends to speak and not to die, for there are few words which cannot be remedied, but a life lost can never be recovered."

"You will promise me, then," said Amador, "that not only will you not be angry at what I want to tell you, but also that you will not be shocked before you have heard it all?"

"Say what you please," replied Florida, "for if you shock me, there is no other who could reassure me."

He began to speak to her: "My lady, I have not yet wanted to speak to you about the great affection I feel for you, and for two reasons: one is that I intended to give you experience of it through long service, and the other is that I feared that you would regard it as vanity for a simple gentleman like myself to present myself where it is not even appropriate for me to look. Even if I were as noble as you, your loyal heart would never permit anyone other than the man who has taken possession of it, the son of the Fortunate Infante, to speak of love to you. But, my lady, just as in the hardships of war necessity often makes a man lay waste his own lands and destroy his own rising crops out of fear that the enemy may profit by them, even so do I take the risk of reaping too soon the fruit which I hoped to gather in due time, to prevent your enemies and mine from taking advantage of it, to your harm.

"Understand, my lady, that from the time when you were still very young, I dedicated myself to your service so completely that I have never ceased searching for ways to acquire your favour. It was for that purpose alone that I married the woman I thought you loved best. Knowing the love that you felt for the son of the Fortunate Infante, I have taken pains to serve him and keep his company, as you know. I have tried

with all my might to do whatever I thought would please you. You see that I have won the respect of the Countess your mother, of the Count your brother, and of all those whom you love, so that I am regarded here not as a servant but as a member of the family. All the pains I have taken for five years have been in order to pass my whole life with you.

"You must know, my lady, that I am not one of those men who expect to receive in this way any favour or pleasure from you which is not consistent with virtue. I know that I cannot marry you; if I could, I would not want to do so, in opposition to the love you feel for the man whom I would gladly see as your husband. What is more, to love you with a impure love, like those who in return for their long service hope for a reward which results in their ladies' dishonour—I am so far away from such desire that I would rather see you dead than know that you were less worthy of being loved, or that your virtue had been diminished for the sake of any pleasure that could come to myself. I ask but one thing of you as the goal and reward for my services, and that is that you be willing to be so loyal a lady to me as never to remove me from your favour, but allow me to continue in my present situation and trust in me more than in anyone else, receiving from me the assurance that if you have need of the life of a gentleman, for your honour or for anything that concerns you, mine will be yours to command, with a loyal heart.

"You may also be sure that whatever I do that is honourable and brave will be done only for love of you. If, for the sake of ladies inferior to you, I have done anything which has won acclaim, you may be assured that for the sake of a lady such as you my exploits will grow, so that things which I found difficult or impossible will seem easy to me. But if you will not accept my total devotion, I am planning to give up arms and to renounce that valour, on grounds of having failed to help me in my need. Therefore I entreat you, my lady, to grant my just request, since your honour and conscience cannot refuse it to me."

The young lady, hearing such a strange speech, began to change colour and lowered her eyes in astonishment. Nevertheless, since she was prudent, she replied, "Since it is the case, Amador, that you are requesting from me what you already have, why is it that you make me such a lengthy speech? I am afraid that there may be some malice hidden under your courteous and modest language in order to deceive the inexperience of my youth, and I am at a loss as to how to answer you. If I were to reject the virtuous friendship you offer me, I would be acting contrary to what I have done so far; for I have relied on you more than any man in the world. Neither my conscience nor my honour resists your request in any way, nor the love I bear to the son of the Fortunate Infante, for it rests on marriage, to which you do not aspire. I do not know anything which ought to prevent me from giving you the answer which you desire, except the fear I have in my heart, arising from the fact that you have no reason to speak to me as you do: if you already have what you ask, what compels you to ask for it again with so zealously?"

Amador, not at a loss for a reply, said: "You speak very prudently, my lady, and you do me so much honour by the confidence which you say you have in me that if I were not content with such a blessing I would be unworthy of all others. But consider, my lady, that he who wishes to build a enduring edifice must take care to select a good and solid foundation. Since I wish to remain in your service forever, I must consider not only ways to be near you, but also ways to prevent my great affection for you from being perceived. Although this affection is so pure that it could be announced everywhere, still it is the case that those who do not know the hearts of lovers have often judged them falsely. This gives rise to scandal as much as if the lovers' behaviour were wicked.

"What makes me say this, and what has made me speak to you unseasonably, is that Paulina senses in her heart that I cannot love her, and has become so suspicious of me that she constantly observes my expression wherever I may be. When you come to speak with me so intimately in her presence, I am so afraid of giving some sign on which she may base an opinion that I fall into the error I wish to avoid. I therefore decided to ask you not to address me so suddenly in her presence or before those whom you know to be equally malicious; I would rather be dead than let any living creature know about it. If it were not for the love I have for your honour, I would never have undertaken to make this declaration to you, especially since I consider myself so happy in the love and the confidence you have in me that I desire nothing more than their continuance."

Florida, so delighted that she could hardly contain herself, began to feel in her heart something more than she had been accustomed to feel. Seeing the honourable arguments which he offered her, she told him that virtue and honesty would reply for her and would grant him what he was requesting. No one who loves could doubt that Amador was full of joy.

But Florida followed his advice better than he wanted. Since she was nervous not only in Paulina's presence, but everywhere else too, she no longer sought him out as she had been accustomed to do. In this estrangement, she even disapproved of his companionship with Paulina, who seemed so beautiful that she could not believe he did not love her. As consolation for her grief, she stayed constantly with Aventurada, who was herself beginning to be very jealous of her husband and Paulina. She often complained to Florida, who, struck by the same disease, consoled her as well as possible.

Amador, soon perceiving the change in Florida's conduct, believed that she was distant with him not only because of his advice but also partly because of some unfavourable opinions. One day, as he returning from vespers at a monastery, he said to her: "What sort of treatment do you show me, my lady?"

"Such as I believe you wish me to show," she replied.

Suspecting the truth then, he continued, in order to determine whether he was correct: "I have spent my time in such a way, my lady, that Paulina has no more suspicions of you."

"You could not have acted more appropriately for yourself and for me," she replied; "for in giving yourself pleasure, you do me honour."

Amador suspected from these words that she believed he took pleasure in talking with Paulina. He was so disturbed that he could not help saying angrily, "My lady, it is very soon to begin tormenting a servant, and very early to cast stones at him! I do not think I have ever endured any more troublesome pain that the necessity of speaking to one whom I do not love at all. Since you put a bad light on something that has been done in your service, I will never speak to Paulina again, no matter what may happen! In order to hide my anger as I have hidden my joy, I will depart to some place near by, and wait until this fancy of yours has passed. But I hope that I will receive news from my captain summoning me to return to the war, where I will remain long enough for you to realize that nothing keeps me in this place but you!"

So saying, he went away at once, without waiting for her reply. Florida was left behind, feeling such grief and sadness that it could not have been greater. Love, impelled by its opposite, began to display its great strength, so much so that, acknowledging that she had been wrong, Florida wrote again and again to Amador begging him to return; he did so after a few days, as his great anger had subsided.

I could not undertake to tell you in detail the words they spoke to each other to destroy this jealousy. At any event, he won the battle, so completely that she promised not only that she would never believe he loved Paulina, but even that she would remain convinced that it was an unbearable martyrdom for him to speak to Paulina or any other woman, except in order to serve herself.

When love had conquered this first suspicion and the two lovers were beginning to take more pleasure than ever in conversing with each other, news came that the King of Spain was sending his entire army to Salces. Amador, who was accustomed to be in the forefront, had no desire to fail to acquire glory; but it is true that he set out with an unaccustomed regret, both because of the pleasure he was losing and because he was afraid of finding things changed on his return. He realized that many princes and great lords were seeking Florida's hand and that she had already reached the age of fifteen or sixteen years; and so he thought that if she were married during his absence he would have no more opportunity to see her, unless the Countess of Aranda gave his wife Aventurada to her as her companion. He managed his affairs with his friends so well that the Countess and Florida both promised him that wherever she resided after her marriage, his wife Aventurada would go with her. As there was a talk then of marrying Florida in Portugal, it was resolved that Aventurada would never part from her. With this assurance Amador departed, not without unspeakable regret, leaving his wife with the Countess.

Florida, left alone by the departure of her loyal servant, undertook to perform all manner of good and virtuous deeds, hoping to attain the reputation of the most perfect lady and to be considered worthy of such a servant as Amador. When he reached

Barcelona, Amador was welcomed as enthusiastically as before by the ladies; but they found him greatly changed, and could never have believed that marriage could have such power over a man as it had over him. It seemed that he was upset at the mere sight of what he formerly desired. Even the Countess of Palamos, whom he had loved so much, could never find a way to bring him to her residence alone. He made as short a stay as possible in Barcelona, since he was impatient to reach the spot where everyone waited for him expectantly. When he arrived at Salces, a great and cruel war broke out between the two kings. I have decided not to give an account it or even of the great deeds performed by Amador, for my tale would be long enough to take up a whole day. You should know that the fame he won surpassed that of all his companions. The Duke of Nájera arrived at Perpignan in charge of two thousand men and asked Amador to be his lieutenant; he did his duty with that band so well that in all the encounters no other battle-cry was heard than "Nájera!"

Now it happened that the King of Tunis, who had been at war with the Spaniards for a long time, learned that Spain and France were waging war on the borders of Perpignan and Narbonne. He thought that he could not find a better time to harass the King of Spain, so he sent a great number of light galleys and other vessels to pillage and destroy any poorly guarded place they could find on the coasts of Spain. The people of Barcelona, seeing so many ships sail by, informed the Viceroy, who was then at Salces. He immediately sent the Duke of Nájera to Palamos. When the Moors saw that the place was so well defended, they acted as if they were sailing by, but returned at midnight and sent so many men ashore that the Duke of Nájera was surprised by his enemies and taken prisoner. Amador, who was very vigilant, heard the noise, instantly assembled as many of his men as he could, and resisted so well that the enemy forces were unable to harm him. But at last, learning that the Duke of Nájera had been captured and that the Turks had decided to set fire to Palamos and burn the building in which he withstood them, he preferred to surrender rather than to be the cause of the loss of the brave men in his company. He also hoped, by paying a ransom, to see Florida again. He surrendered then to a Turk named Dorlin, the governor of the King of Tunis, who took him to his master. He was very well received there, and even better guarded, for the King thought that in Amador he held the Achilles of all Spain.

Amador stayed in his service for nearly two years. The news of the capture reached Spain, and the relatives of the Duke of Nájera were greatly saddened; but those who loved the glory of the country thought the loss of Amador still more grievous. The news came to the Countess of Aranda, where at the time poor Aventurada lay dangerously ill. The Countess, who felt great concern about the tender feelings which Amador entertained for her daughter, but concealed and tried to suppress it because of the virtues which she recognized in him, called her daughter aside and told her this painful news. Florida, who could dissemble well, said it was a great loss for their whole household, and that, above all, she felt pity for his poor wife, especially considering her

sickness. But seeing that her mother wept a great deal, she too let a few tears fall to keep her company, so that her secret would not be discovered by being too well concealed. After that, the Countess often talked about him with her, but could never draw from her any indication on which she could make a definite judgment. I will say nothing of the pilgrimages, prayers, devotions, and fasts which Florida performed regularly for Amador's safety.

As soon as he reached Tunis, Amador sent word to his friends and, by a trustworthy man, informed Florida that he was in good health and full of hope that he would see her again: this was the poor lady's only way to endure her grief. You must not doubt that, since she was permitted to write to him, she performed her duty so diligently that Amador did not go without letters of consolation.

The Countess of Aranda was commanded to go to Saragossa, where the King was had arrived. There she found the young Duke of Cardona, who made such efforts with the King and the Queen that they begged the Countess to conclude a marriage between him and Florida. The Countess, who was unwilling to disobey them, consented to it, believing that her daughter, since she was so young, would have no other will than her own. When everything was settled, she told her daughter that she had chosen for her the match which seemed to her most appropriate. Her daughter, realizing that there was nothing to be done since the matter was decided, replied that God should be praised in all things. Seeing her mother acting so coldly to her, she preferred to obey rather than to pity herself. To increase her misfortune, she heard that the son of the Fortunate Infante was deathly ill, but she never gave a sign before her mother or anyone else. She repressed her feelings so well that the tears she forced back in her heart caused a bleeding at the nose so copious that her life was in danger of ending at any moment: and to restore her health, all she had was marriage to a man she would willingly have exchanged for death!

After the wedding, Florida went with her husband to the Duchy of Cardona, taking Aventurada with her. She made her complaints privately to her, both concerning her mother's harshness towards her and her regret at having lost the son of the Fortunate Infante; as for her sorrow for Amador, she spoke of him only to console Aventurada herself. This young lady decided to keep God and honour always before her eyes, and concealed her sorrows so well that none of her people ever noticed that her husband displeased her.

Florida lived this life. less pleasant than death, for a long time; she did not fail not to make all this known to her servant Amador, who, knowing the greatness and nobility of her heart and the love she felt for the son of the Fortunate Infante, thought that it was impossible that she could live long, and mourned for her as one whom he looked upon as worse than dead. This pain increased his own, and he would gladly have remained a slave all his life if Florida had found a husband after her own heart; so did he forget his sorrows because of those he knew his lady suffered. He learned from a friend he had

made at the court of the King of Tunis that the King had decided to have him impaled if he would not renounce his faith, because he wished to keep him in his service if he could make a good Turk of him. Amador prevailed upon his master Dorlin to let him go on his word of honour. His captor set the ransom so high that he did not think that a man who had so little wealth could raise the amount. And so, without saying a word to the King, his master released him on his word.

After he returned to the King of Spain, he departed very soon to seek his ransom from all his friends. He went straight to Barcelona, where the young Duke of Cardona, the Countess, and Florida had come on some business. As soon as his wife Aventurada learned that her husband had returned, she told Florida, who rejoiced at it, as if for Aventurada's sake. But fearing that the joy of seeing Amador might produce a change in her face and that those who did not know her might notice and therefore misjudge her, she stood by a window in order to catch sight of him from a distance. As soon as she saw him, she ran down a staircase so dark that no one could tell whether she changed colour; she embraced him, brought him up to her room, and then took him to her mother-in-law, who had never met him. He had not been there two days before he became as well loved as he had been in the house of the Countess of Aranda.

I will leave it to you to imagine the conversations which Florida and Amador were able to have together, and the complaints she made about the afflictions she had suffered during his absence. After many tears shed for the grief she felt, as much for having been married against her desires as for having lost the man she loved so passionately and never hoped to see again, she decided to take consolation in the love and confidence she felt for Amador. She nevertheless did not declare it to him; but he had his suspicions, and lost neither time nor opportunity to make her aware of the great love he felt for her.

Just when Florida was on the point of being fully persuaded to accept Amador not as a servant but as a true and perfect lover, an unfortunate event occurred: the King summoned Amador to the court on important business. His wife was so upset when she heard the news that she fainted, and fell down a flight of stairs, injuring herself so severely that she never recovered. Florida, who lost all consolation through her death, mourned as deeply as if she had been deprived of all her close friends and relatives. Amador took it even more badly: he had lost not only one of the best of wives but also the means of ever being able to be with Florida again. He fell into such sadness that he thought he was close to death. The old Duchess of Cardona visited him constantly, repeating the arguments of the philosophers to convince him to bear his wife's death patiently. It was all of no use, for if death assailed him on one side, love, on the other, increased his torment.

Amador, seeing that his wife was buried and that the King had sent him his orders, had no pretext to stay any longer. He felt such despair in his heart that he thought he would lose his senses. Florida, while trying to console him, was his very desolation; she

passed a whole afternoon in conversing with him as graciously as possible, believing that she could decrease his sorrow by assuring him that she would find a way to see him more often than he supposed. Because he was to depart on the following day, and was so weak that he could not leave his bed, he begged her to come to see him again that evening, after every one else had left. She promised to do so, unaware that excessive love does not recognize the restraint of reason. Despairing of ever again seeing the woman he had served for so long, from whom he had never had any favours but what you have heard, he was so tormented by his hidden love and his despair at losing all his opportunities to visit her that he decided to play double or nothing, to win or lose her completely, and to pay himself in one hour with the benefits he thought he had merited. He had his bed hung with curtains in such a way that those who came into the room could not see him, and he complained more than usual, so much so that everyone in the house thought he had less than twenty-four hours to live.

That evening, after every one else had visited him, Florida came at her husband's request to see Amador, intending to console him and to declare her affection, and especially to tell him that she wished to love him as much as honour could permit. She sat on a chair beside the head of his bed and began her consolation by weeping with him. Amador, seeing her filled with such regret, thought that in this great torment he could more easily attain his purpose, and sat up in his bed. Florida, thinking he was too weak for that, wanted to prevent him. He fell on his knees before her and said, "Must I lose you forever?" He let himself fall into her arms like a man whose strength has failed him. Poor Florida embraced and supported him for a long time, doing all she could to comfort him; but the medicine she applied to soothe his pain made it much stronger. Pretending to he half dead and not saying a word, he tried to seek out what the honour of ladies prohibits.

When Florida realized his evil purpose, she was unable to believe it, given the honourable discussions he had always had with her. She asked him what he wanted. Amador, fearing a response from her which he knew would only be chaste and virtuous, pursued what he sought with all possible force, without saying a word. Florida was astonished, and preferred to believe that he was out of his mind than that he had intended to dishonour her. She called aloud to a gentleman who she knew was in the room with her, so Amador, in total despair, threw himself back on his bed so suddenly that the gentleman thought he was dead. Florida, who had risen from her chair, said to him, "Go and bring some vinegar quickly!" The gentleman did so. Then Florida said, "What madness, Amador, has come into your mind?"

Amador, who had lost all reason by the force of his love, replied: "Does such long service merit such cruelty?"

"And where is that honour," said Florida, "which you have so often preached to me?"

"Ah, my lady," said Amador, "it is impossible to love your honour more than I have done. Before you were married I was able to master my heart so well that you never

were aware of what I wanted; but now that you are married, and your honour can be shielded, what wrong do I do you in asking you for what belongs to me? For have I not won you? The first who man had your heart has pursued your body so poorly that he has deserved to lose both. The one who possesses your body is not worthy of having your heart; therefore even the body does not belong to him.

"But I, my lady, have endured such pains and ills for your sake during the last five or six years that you cannot be unaware that your body and your heart, for which I have forgotten my own, belong only to me. If you plan to defend yourself on the ground of conscience, do not doubt that when love forces the body and the heart, it is never considered a sin. Even those who are go so far as to kill themselves in their fury cannot sin, no matter what they do; for passion leaves no room for reason. And if the passion of love is the most unbearable of all, and the one which most blinds all the senses, what sin could you attribute to a man who lets himself be led by an invincible power? I am going away, and I do not hope ever to see you again. But if, before my departure, I had from you that assurance which my great love deserves, I would be strong enough to endure the pains of that long absence patiently. If it does not please you to grant me what I ask, you will soon learn that your rigor has given me a miserable, cruel death."

Florida, no less grieved than astonished to hear such language from a man whom she had never before distrusted, replied, in tears, "Are these, Amador, the virtuous speeches you made to me during my youth? Is this the honour and the good conscience for which you have often advised me to die rather than to lose my own soul? Have you forgotten the good examples you have given me of virtuous ladies who have resisted mad love, and the scorn you have always expressed for wanton women? I cannot believe, Amador, that you are so different from yourself that God, your conscience and my honour are completely dead in you. But if what you say is the case, I thank Divine Goodness for having prevented the misfortune into which I was about to throw myself, by showing me through your speech the bottom of your heart, which I have never understood until now. After losing the son of the Fortunate Infante, not only by my marriage, but also because I know he loves another, and seeing myself married to a man I cannot love or find agreeable, no matter what effort I make, I had decided to love you completely and with my whole heart. I based this affection on the virtue which I have discerned in you, and which I think I myself have attained through your means, which is to love my honour and my conscience more than my very life. On this rock of virtue I had decided to establish a good foundation: but in one moment, Amador, you have shown me that instead of a pure clean rock the foundation of this edifice would have been on drifting sand or on filthy mud. Though a great part of the house in which I hoped to abide permanently was already built, you have destroyed it all! It is necessary for you to give up any expectations you have ever had of me, and make up your mind never to think of seeking me out, either in word or action, and never to expect that I could or would change my mind. I say this to you with the greatest possible regret; but if I had gone so

far as to pledge perfect friendship with you, I am sure my heart would have died in this encounter. Indeed, the amazement I feel at having been deceived is so great that I am certain it will make my life either brief or unhappy. With these words, I bid you farewell, forever!"

I will not attempt to convey to you the anguish Amador felt at hearing these words. It would be impossible to describe it or even to imagine it, except for those who have had a similar experience. Seeing that she was departing, with this cruel conclusion, he caught her by the arm, knowing very well that he would lose her forever if he did not remove the bad opinion which he had given her. Therefore, he said to her, with the most virtuous expression he could manage: "My lady, for my whole life I have wanted to love a woman of virtue; and because I have found so few of them, I wanted to test you, to see if you were, in your virtue, as worthy of being esteemed as you are of being loved. Now I know for certain, God be praised, that I have given my heart to such perfection. I beg you to pardon my folly and my audacious enterprise, since you see that the outcome results in your honour and my great contentment."

Florida was beginning to have her eyes opened to the wiles of men. She had found it difficult to believe evil where it existed, and now found it still more difficult to believe good where it was not, and said to him: "Would to God that you were speaking the truth! But I am aware, because of my experience in marriage, that the force of blind passion has made you do what you have done. If God had slackened the reins, I am certain you would not have tightened the bridle. Those who attempt to seek virtue are not accustomed to take the road you have taken. But enough of this. If I believed too easily that there was some good in you, it is time for me to recognize the truth, which now delivers me out of your hands."

With these words, Florida left the room, and did nothing but weep the whole night, feeling such great anguish from this change that her heart could hardly bear the waves of regret with which love assailed her. According to reason, she was determined never to love him again, but still the heart, which is not in our control, was unwilling to agree. Unable, then, to love him less than she had, and knowing that love was the cause of his error, she resolved to cherish him as warmly as ever, but in obedience to honour never to give any sign of it.

Amador went away the next day, in such distress as you have heard. His heart, however, which was so great that it had no equal in the world, did not allow him to despair, but gave him a new device to see Florida again and regain her favour. Travelling to see the King of Spain, who was in Toledo, he took the road through the County of Aranda. He arrived late one evening and found the Countess sick with grief at the absence of her daughter Florida. She kissed and embraced him as though he were her own son, as much because she loved him as because she suspected that he loved Florida. She asked news of her, and he told her as much as he could, but not the whole truth. He

admitted the friendship between them, which Florida had always concealed, and begged her mother to send him news of her often, and to bring her soon to Aranda.

He departed in the morning, and after completing his business with the King, returned to the wars, so melancholy and so changed in behaviour that the ladies, the captains and everyone with whom he was intimate could hardly recognize him. He wore only black clothes of homespun cloth much coarser than necessary for mourning his wife, which was the pretext to cover what he felt in his heart.

Amador lived in this way for three or four years, without returning to court. The Countess of Aranda, hearing that Florida was so changed that it was pitiful to see her, sent to ask after her, hoping that she would come home. On the contrary, however, when Florida learned that Amador had told her mother about their love, and that her mother, though so discreet and so virtuous, had such confidence in Amador that she approved of it, she was greatly perplexed. On the one hand, she saw that her mother admired Amador so much that if she told her the truth, it would cause trouble for Amador, which she would not have done for her life, seeing that she was quite able to punish him for his madness without calling in her family. On the other hand, she saw that if she concealed the wickedness she recognized in him, her mother and all her friends would require her to speak with him and be agreeable to him; that, she feared, would encourage his evil intentions. But since he was far away, she said gave no sign of all this, and wrote to him when the Countess told her to do so; but they were letters which he could easily recognize as written more out of obedience than good will, so that the pain Amador felt in reading them was as great as the joy he had formerly received from her letters.

At the end of two or three years, having performed so many fine exploits that all the paper in Spain could not contain them, Amador devised a grand plan, not to win Florida's heart, for he believed he had lost it, but to have victory over his enemy, since that was how she was treating him. Setting aside all the promptings of reason, and even the fear of the death which he was risking, he decided on the following plan. He conducted himself in such a way with the governor that he was chosen to report to the King concerning a respecting certain secret enterprise under way against Leucate. He took it on himself to inform the Countess of Aranda about this undertaking to receive her advice before he had consulted with the King. He travelled straight to Aranda, since he knew that Florida was there, and sent one of his friends ahead to tell the Countess that he was coming, begging her to keep it secret and to speak with him that night without anyone knowing. The Countess, very pleased his arrival, told Florida and sent her to undress in her husband's room, so that she might be ready when she sent for her after everyone was in bed. Florida, who had not recovered from her first fear, said nothing to her mother, and went to her oratory to commend herself to Our Lord, praying Him to preserve her heart from all wicked emotion. Remembering that Amador had often praised her for her beauty, which had not diminished despite her long illness,

she preferred to impair it by injuring her own face rather than to allow the heart of such a worthy man to burn with such wicked fire because of it. She took a stone which she found in the chapel and struck herself in the face so hard that her mouth, eyes, and nose were all disfigured. So that no one would suspect that she had done it on purpose, when the Countess sent for her she let herself fall as she was coming out of the chapel. Her face struck the ground and she cried out loudly. The Countess arrived and found her in that piteous condition; all her face was immediately cleansed and bandaged. Then her mother took her to her own room and asked her to entertain Amador until she had sent away her company. Florida obeyed, supposing that there would be other people with him. But when she found herself alone with him, and the door closed behind her, she was as much upset as Amador was delighted, thinking that he would achieve, by love or by force, what he had desired so much.

After speaking with her and finding her with the same feelings as he had left her, and because she would rather die than change her mind, he exclaimed, in desperation, "By God, Florida, the fruit of my labour will never be taken from me by your scruples! Since love, patience, and humble entreaties are of no avail, I will use all my force to acquire the favour without which I would perish."

When Florida saw Amador, his face and his eyes were so changed that the most handsome complexion in the world had become red as fire, and the mildest and gentlest face had become so horrible and furious that it seemed that a blazing fire was shooting up from his heart and out through his eyes. In his rage he seized Florida's delicate hands in his strong and powerful fist. She found herself deprived of all her defences and tightly held, hand and foot, in such captivity that she could not flee, much less protect herself. She knew no better remedy than to see if there were any trace remaining of his former love, in honour of which he might forget his cruelty.

Therefore she said to him: "If you now consider me an enemy, Amador, I beg you, by the virtuous love which I formerly believed to be in your heart, listen to me before you torture me!"

When she saw that he was listening, she continued her attempt: "What can possess you, Amador, to desire something from which you can have no pleasure, which would give me all the grief I could bear? You have known my feelings, when I was young and at the height of my beauty: that might have been an excuse for your passion, but I wonder how, at my present age and with my great ugliness, you could seek what you know you cannot find. I am certain that you do not doubt that my wishes are still the same, and you could therefore have what you want only by force. Look at the state of my face, forget the beauty you used to see in it, and you will lose all desire to come near me. If there is any remnant of past love in you, it is impossible for pity not to conquer your rage. It is to the pity that I have found in you by experience that I appeal for mercy, so that you will allow me to live in peace and with my honour, which, in accordance with your advice, I am resolved to preserve. If the love you had for me has been

transformed into hatred, and if more for revenge than for love you now wish to make me the most miserable woman on earth, I assure you that it will not be so! You will force me to declare your vicious conduct openly to my mother, who thinks so well of you. If this is known, you may be sure that your life is not safe."

Amador interrupted her, saying "If I must die, I will soon be free of my torment. But the disfigurement of your face—which I think you have done of your own will—cannot prevent me from doing what I want. Even if I could have nothing of you but your bones, I would want to hold them close to me."

When Florida saw that neither entreaties, arguments, nor tears were of any use, and that he was pursuing his wicked purpose with such cruelty that she had no strength to resist, she sought the aid which she feared as much as the loss of life, and cried out sadly and pitifully to her mother, as loudly as she could. Hearing her daughter call her in such a voice, the Countess was dreadfully afraid of what was in fact true, and rushed to her as quickly as she could. Amador—who was not as near to death as he said—abandoned his attempt so quickly that the Countess on opening the room found him at the door, and Florida some distance away. "What is the matter, Amador?" said the Countess. "Tell me the truth."

Amador, never at a loss for an inventiveness, answered, with a pale and woebegone face, "Alas! my lady, what has happened to Florida? No man was ever more surprised than I am. As I told you, I thought that I had some share in her favour, but now I see plainly I no longer have any of it. It seems, my lady, that when she was being raised with you she was no less prudent or less virtuous than she is now; but then she had no qualms about talking to people and looking at them. Now, when I wanted to look at her, she would not allow it. When I saw such behaviour, I thought it must be a dream or a trance, and I asked for her hand to kiss, according to the custom of the country, but she absolutely refused. It is true, madam, I was wrong, and I beg your forgiveness for it: I took her hand by force, and kissed it. I asked no more comfort of her, but I believe that she is determined that I should die, and so she called you, as you have seen. I do not know why, unless she was afraid I had some purpose other than what I have. Nevertheless, my lady, I acknowledge that in some way or other I was wrong; for though she ought to love all your loyal servants, fortune wants me, the most affectionate, to have no part in her favour. And yet I will remain as I have been, with regard both to her and to you; and I entreat you to let me stay in your favour since I have lost hers through no fault of my own."

The Countess, who half believed and half doubted him, went to her daughter and said, "Why did you call out so loudly?"

Florida replied that she had been afraid. No matter how insistently the Countess questioned her, still Florida would give no other reply. Seeing that she had escaped from the hands of her enemy, she thought he had been sufficiently punished by being thwarted in his attempt.

After the Countess had spoken with Amador for a long time, she allowed him speak again with Florida, in her presence, in order to see how he would behave; but he did not say much to her, except that he thanked her for not telling her mother the truth, and begged her that at least, since he was banished from her heart, no other man might take his place.

As to the first matter, she replied, "If I had had any other way to defend myself against you besides my voice, it never would have been heard. But you will have nothing worse from me, unless you continue to force me to it. And do not be afraid that I could ever love another man. In the heart I knew to be the most noble in all the world, I have not found the virtue I desired, and so I will never believe that it exists in any man. This misfortune will free me forever from all the passions which love can cause." With these words, she parted from him.

Her mother, though she had been watching her face carefully, could make no judgment, except that from that time one she was certain that her daughter had no more affection for Amador. She thought that Florida was unreasonable enough to hate anyone that she herself liked. From than moment on she feuded with Florida, and for seven years she never spoke to her without becoming angry, and all because of Amador.

During that time, Florida transformed the fear she had of being with her husband into a wish never to leave his side, because of her mother's harshness. But seeing that nothing succeeded with her, she decided to deceive Amador. Setting aside her cold behaviour for a day or two, she advised him to make advances to a lady who, she said, had spoken of their mutual love. This lady, who lived in the Queen's household, was named Loretta. Amador believed her, and thinking he could return to her favour in this manner, paid court to Loretta, who was the wife of a captain, one of the great governors of the King of Spain. Loretta, delighted at having won such a servant, was so pleased by it all and put on airs so much that rumours about it spread everywhere. The Countess of Aranda was herself at court, and when she became aware of it she did not torment Florida as much as before. Florida heard one day that Loretta's husband, the captain, was so jealous that he had decided to kill Amador, no matter what the risk. Despite her pretences, Florida could not wish Amador ill, and warned him. But he, who would have been glad to return to his old ways, replied that if it pleased her to converse with him every day for three hours, he would never speak to Loretta again; but she was unwilling to agree to it.

"Since you do not wish me to live," said Amador, "why do you want to rescue me from death, unless you hope to cause me more pain by keeping me alive than a thousand deaths? Even if death runs away from me, I will seek it until I find it; for only on that day will I be at rest!"

While they were in such circumstances, news arrived that the King of Grenada was beginning a war against the King of Spain, and the King sent his son the Prince there with the Constable of Castile and the Duke of Alba, two old and wise lords. The Duke

of Cardona and the Count of Aranda were not willing to stay behind, and begged the King to give them some command. The King gave them appointments suitable to their station, and in order to provide them with good advice, sent Amador, who during the war performed astonishing feats which revealed as much desperation as valour. And, to come to my story's conclusion, his excessive bravery at last cost him his life.

The Moors gave signs of joining battle, but seeing the great size of the Christian army, pretended to retreat. The Spaniards gave pursuit, but the old Constable and the Duke of Alba, suspecting the trick, prevented the Prince of Spain, against his will, from crossing the river. The Count of Aranda and the Duke of Cardona, however, crossed it, despite orders to the contrary. When the Moors saw that they were pursued only by a few people, they wheeled round, and with a single stroke of a scimitar the Duke of Cardona was killed. The Count of Aranda was so dangerously wounded that he was left for dead on the field. Amador arrived at the scene of this disaster, so enraged and furious that he cut through the press of battle and had the two bodies taken up and carried to the camp of the Prince, who mourned them as if they had been his own brothers. On examining their wounds, the Count of Aranda was found to be still alive, and so he was laid on a litter and carried to his house, where he lay ill for a long time. The body of the young Duke was sent to Cardona. Amador, having made the effort to rescue the two bodies, cared so little for his own safety that he found himself surrounded by a great number of Moors. Just as he had failed to capture his love, so now he would not allow the Moors to capture him; he had broken his faith with her, but he would not break his faith with God—for he knew that if he was taken to the King of Grenada he would die cruelly or have to renounce Christianity. He resolved not to give his enemies the glory of his death or his capture. Kissing the cross of his sword and commending his body and soul to God, he struck himself such a forceful blow that no second was needed.

Thus died poor Amador, as much mourned as his valour deserved. The report instantly spread throughout all Spain, and Florida, who was then at Barcelona where her husband had directed that he was to be buried, heard the news. After she had had her husband honourably interred, she retired into the Convent of Jesus, without saying a word to her mother or her mother-in-law, taking for her spouse and lover Him who had delivered her from Amador's violent love and from the distress caused her by the company of such a husband. She turned all her attentions to loving God so perfectly that, after having been a nun for many years, she surrendered up her soul to Him with the joy of a bride going to meet her bridegroom.

"I am sure, ladies, that this long story might be tedious to some; but it would have been much longer if I had wanted to do justice to the one who told it to me. I beseech you to take example from Florida's virtue, but to diminish her cruelty somewhat. Never have such high expectations of men that, when you have experience of the contrary, it results in giving them a cruel death and you a sad life."

After Parlamente had had a long and attentive audience, she said to Hircan, "Does it seem to you that this lady was tested to the limit, and that she resisted virtuously?"

"No," said Hircan. "The feeblest resistance a woman can make is to cry out. But I don't know what she would have done if she had been where no one could hear her. If Amador had been more loving and less fearful, he would not have given up so easily. I will not give up my belief, on account of this example, that no man who loves perfectly and is loved by a lady in return ever fails to obtain his goal if he makes his pursuit appropriately. I must, however, praise Amador for having, at least in part, done his duty."

"What duty?" said Oisille. "Do you call it *duty* for a servant to try to take his lady, to whom he owes all reverence and obedience, by force?"

"But, my lady," replied Saffredent, "when our ladies sit in state in chamber or hall, seated at their ease as our judges, we kneel before them, we timidly lead them out to dance, we serve them so diligently that we anticipate their commands. We seem so afraid offending them and so eager to serve them that those who see us feel pity for us and think that we are more foolish than beasts, or out of our senses. They praise our ladies, whose appearances are so haughty and whose words are so elegant that they make themselves feared, loved, and esteemed—by those who see only the outside. But when we are in private, love is the only judge of our behaviour, we know very well that they are women and we are men. The name of "lady" is then changed to that of "mistress," and he who was a "servant" in public becomes a "lover." And so, as the old proverb says, 'Through good and loyal service, a servant becomes the master.' Women have as much honour as men, who can give it to them and take it away, and they see that we suffer patiently; but it is proper for our service to be rewarded, if honour is not injured."

"You do not speak," said Longarine, "of the true honour which is the most perfect contentment in this world. If everyone said that I was a virtuous woman and I alone knew the contrary, praise would increase my shame and make me internally troubled. On the other hand, if they condemned me and I was sure of my innocence, their blame would turn into contentment for me, for no one is truly happy except in themselves."

"No matter what the rest of you say," observed Geburon, "it seems to me that Amador was as worthy and virtuous a knight as there could be. Although the names have been changed, I think I recognize him; but since Parlamente has not wished to name him, neither will I. But rest assured that if he is the man I think, his heart was never touched by fear or exempt from love or bravery."

"It seems to me," said Oisille, "that this day has passed so agreeably that if the rest of us continue this way, our time will fly by in pleasant conversations. See how low the sun is already, and hear the abbey bells, which have been calling us to vespers for long time now. I did not tell you so before, because zeal for knowing the end of the story was greater than that for hearing vespers."

Everyone rose, and proceeding to the abbey they found that the monks had been waiting for them for more than an hour. After vespers they took supper, and the evening was passed in discussing the tales that had been told in the day, and searching their memories for stories to make the next day pass as agreeably as the first. After no end of sports in the meadow, everyone went to bed highly contented by the way in which their first day had been spent.

The Force of Blood

from *Exemplary Novels*

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Spanish, 1613

On a hot summer night, an elderly *hidalgo*, his wife, his little son, a sixteen-year old daughter and a maid-servant were returning from refreshing themselves by the river at Toledo. It was eleven o'clock, the night was clear, the road was solitary, and the pace was slow, so that they would not pay in weariness for the pleasure derived from the river or the meadows at Toledo. Confidently, because of the excellent policing of the city and its law-abiding population, the good gentleman and his family were walking without a thought of any disaster that might happen to them. But most accidents are unexpected: and quite contrary to their expectations, a misfortune overtook them which destroyed their contentment and caused them many years of sorrow.

There was a knight in that city, who must have been about twenty-two years old; wealth, illustrious blood, a perverted inclination, excessive liberty and immoral companions had led him to indulge in outrages which disgraced his rank and earned him a reputation for impudence. This gentleman—for the moment, for sound reasons we will conceal his name and call him Rodolfo—was coming down the same hill which the old *hidalgo* was ascending; he had with him four friends, all high-spirited, insolent young men. The two groups, the sheep and the wolves, met; with disgraceful audacity Rodolfo and his companions, keeping themselves covered, stared right at the faces of the mother, the daughter and the servant. The old man grew angry, reproached them, and reprimanded them for their impertinence. They answered him with sneers and derision: and without troubling themselves further they continued on their way. But the great beauty of Leocadia's face—for it is appropriate for the *hidalgo's* daughter to be so called—began to impress itself on Rodolfo's memory in such a way that it drew his intentions after her and aroused in him a desire to enjoy her, in spite of any consequences that might result. In an instant he shared his thoughts with his companions, and in another instant they had decided to turn back and abduct her, in order to please Rodolfo. Rich men who are free with their money can always find someone to approve their excesses, and say that their evil tastes are good.

So the birth of the wicked plan, the discussion and approval of it, the decision to carry Leocadia off and her abduction were all done, as it were, in a moment. They put their handkerchiefs over their faces, drew their swords, and returned; in a few steps they overtook the family who were still thanking God for freeing them from the hands of such insolent men. Rodolfo seized Leocadia, gathered her up in his arms, and rushed

off with her. She had no strength to defend herself; surprise robbed her of the ability to cry for help and even of the light of her eyes. Fainting and senseless, she could not see who was carrying her off or where she was being taken. Her father called out, her mother screamed, her little brother wept, the maid-servant tore at her face; but the shouts were not heard, the screams were not heeded, the weeping inspired no compassion, and the scratches were useless: the solitude of the place, the silence of the night, and the cruelty of the malefactors concealed everything. At last, one group went off joyfully, the other remained behind in sorrow.

Rodolfo arrived home without any difficulty, and Leocadia's parents reached theirs, in tears, sorrowful and desperate: blind, without their daughter's eyes, which were the light of their eyes; alone, because Leocadia was their sweet and pleasant company; bewildered, not knowing if it would be proper to inform the authorities of their disgrace, fearing to be the principal means of announcing their dishonour. They saw that they needed protection, since they were only poor *hidalgos*, but they did not know whom to blame, except perhaps their own pitiful destiny.

Rodolfo, who was shrewd and cunning, already had Leocadia inside his house and in his own rooms. Although he had felt her fainting when he carried her off, he had covered her eyes with a handkerchief so that she could not see the streets through which he was carrying her or the house or the rooms where she was. He had brought her there without being seen by anyone, because he had separate rooms in his father's house—his father was still alive—and he had keys for his room and all the others in the apartment, a piece of neglect on the part any father who might wish to keep his son under control.

Rodolfo had satisfied his desire before Leocadia recovered from her faint, since the unchaste impulses of youth seldom or never pay any attention to what is fitting or what is necessary, but are rather more stimulated and excited by their absence. Blind to the light of understanding, he robbed Leocadia, in the darkness, of her greatest treasure. Since sins of sensuality generally do not aim at anything beyond their own gratification, Rodolfo soon wished that Leocadia would disappear from the place.

It occurred to him to leave her in the street, unconscious as she was, but as he began to put his idea into practice, he noticed that she was coming to herself, saying, "Where am I, poor unfortunate! What darkness is this? What clouds encircle me? Am I in the limbo of my innocence, or in the inferno of my sins? Jesus! Who is touching me? Am I in bed, unhappy wretch that I am? Are you listening to me, my lady mother? Do you hear me, dear father? Ah, unhappy me! How well I realize that my parents do not hear me, and that my enemies are touching me! I would be fortunate indeed if this darkness would last forever, if my eyes never saw the light of the world again. I wish that this place where I am, whatever it may be, might serve as the grave of my honour, for unknown dishonour is better than the honour that is suspected by the multitude. Now I remember—I wish could not!—that just now I was walking with my parents. Now I

remember that I was attacked. Now I imagine, I see that it is not proper for anyone to see me. Whoever you may be, here with me,"—and, saying this, she grasped Rodolfo's hands—"if your soul is open to any kind of plea, I implore you, now that you have conquered my reputation, conquer my life as well. Take it from me at once! It is not right that one who has lost her honour should live! Let the heartless cruelty you have shown by offending me be tempered by the compassion you would show by killing me. And so, at one single moment you will manage to be both cruel and merciful."

Leocadia's entreaties left Rodolfo confused; as a young man of little experience, he did not know what to say or do. His silence surprised Leocadia even more; with her hands she tried to discover whether she was with a phantom or a shade. But when she felt a live body, and remembered the force with which he assaulted her when she was walking with her parents, she understood her disgrace more fully; with this thought, she began to put together the words which her many sobs and sighs had interrupted, saying: "Audacious youth—for your deeds make me think you are young—I will forgive you for the wrong you have done me, if only you will promise me and swear that, just as you have covered it with darkness, you will cover it with perpetual silence, never mentioning it to anyone. It is small recompense that I ask of you for such a great outrage, but for me it is the greatest I could ask of you or that you might care to give me. Remember that I have never seen your face, and I do not want to see it. Now that I recall the outrage done to me, I do not wish to remember the offender or to recall the image of the author of my injury. My complaints will pass between me and Heaven, without any desire for the world to hear them; for the world does not judge by what happens, but according to its own fixed opinions. I do not know how I am able to say these truths to you, which are usually based on the experience of many examples and on the passage of many years: I am not yet seventeen. By this I understand that grief, in one and the same way, ties and unties the tongue of one who is afflicted, sometimes exaggerating the evil so that it will be believed, at other times not proclaiming it, so that no one will try to assuage it. In any case, whether I speak or keep silent, I think that I will move you to believe me or to relieve me. Not to believe me would be ignorance, and trying to comfort me could not console me. I am not ready to give up hope, because it will cost you little to grant me what I ask, and it is this: do not suppose or trust that the passage of time will moderate the just rage I feel toward you, and do not try to add more injuries; the less you possess me—seeing that you have already possessed me—the less your evil passions will be inflamed. Act as if you injured me by chance, without the opportunity for better reflection, and I will make believe that I was never born into the world, or that, if I was born, it was to be unfortunate. Put me at once in the street, or at least close to the Cathedral; from there, I will know how to return home. You must swear not to follow me, or learn where I live, or try to find out the name of my parents, or my own, or that of my relations; if they were as rich as they are noble, they would not have been so unfortunate in me. Answer this, and if you are afraid I might recognize you by your

voice, you should know that I have not spoken with any man in my life except my father and my confessor, and I have so little experience of men's conversation that there are few I could recognize by the sound of their voices."

Rodolfo's only answer to the discreet pleadings of the distressed girl was to embrace her, and to give signs that he wanted to renew his pleasure and her dishonour. When Leocadia realized this, she defended herself with more strength than her tender age seemed to promise, using her feet, her hands, her teeth—and her tongue, saying, "You must realize, you treacherous, heartless man, whoever you may be, that the spoils you have taken from me are such as you could have obtained from a senseless stock or stone! Such a conquest or triumph must bring you infamy and disgrace. But you will not obtain what you want now except by my death! You defeated me and overcame me when I had fainted away; but now that I have come to myself, you can kill me before you can conquer me! If I should yield without resistance to your abominable lust now that I am awake, you would imagine that I was pretending to faint when you dared to ruin me."

In short, Leocadia made such a brave and determined a resistance that Rodolfo's strength and passion began to weaken. The insolence with which he had behaved to Leocadia originated only in a lascivious appetite, from which the true, permanent love never arises; in place of the transitory impulse, there remained, if not remorse, at least a listless will to follow it up. Cold and wearied, Rodolfo left Leocadia in his bed in his house, without uttering a word. Locking the apartment, he went off in search of his comrades, to consult with them about what to do.

Leocadia realized that she had been left alone, and locked in; rising from the bed she explored the whole of the apartment, touching the walls with her hands to see if she could find a door by which to escape or a window out of which she could throw herself. She found the door, but it was locked; she came upon a window which she could open; the light of the moon shone through it, so clearly that Leocadia could distinguish the colours of some damask hangings that adorned the apartment. She saw that the bed was gilded, and so richly furnished that it seemed to be the bed of a prince rather than of any private gentleman. She counted the chairs and the desks; she noted the location of the door, and also saw some pictures hanging on the walls, but she could not manage to see what they depicted. The window was large, adorned and guarded by a thick grating, and it opened onto a garden shut in by high walls: obstacles preventing her plan to leap into the street. Everything she could learn about the size and about the costly ornaments of the house suggested to her that its owner must be an important and wealthy man, not just well off, but exceedingly rich. On a writing-desk close to the window, she saw a little crucifix, completely of silver; she took it and slipped it into the sleeve of her gown: not from devotion, not as a theft, but inspired by a clever design. Then she closed the window again and returned to the bed, waiting for whatever end the bad beginning of her adventure might bring.

It seemed to her that less than half an hour had passed when she heard the door of the apartment open; someone came to her, and silently blindfolded her, took her by the arm, led her out of the room, and turned to lock the door. It was Rodolfo; although he had gone to seek his companions, he did not choose to find them, for it seemed to him that it was best not to make them witnesses of what had happened with the girl. He resolved instead to tell them that he had repented of his evil deed and, moved by her tears, had abandoned her on the way. With this plan in mind, he returned quickly in order to leave Leocadia close to the Cathedral before dawn, as she had begged him, before daylight prevented him from putting her outside and forced him to keep her in his apartment until the following night: he did want not to use force again or to provide, during such a long period of time, any opportunity of being recognized. He took her to the square called the Plaza del Ayuntamiento, and there in a disguised voice, and in a language half Portuguese and half Castilian, he told her that she could go to her house safely, because she would not be followed. Before she had had an opportunity to remove the blindfold, he had already gone where he could not be seen. Leocadia was left alone; she removed the blindfold and recognized the place where she had been left. She looked all around, and saw no one. Suspecting that she might be followed at a distance, however, she paused at every step, although proceeding in the direction of her home, which was not very far. To confuse any spies who might be following her, she went into a house that was open, and then after a little while she walked to her own house, where she found her parents prostrate with grief and still dressed; they had not even considered taking any rest.

When they saw her they ran to her with open arms, and welcomed her with tears in their eyes. Leocadia, anxious and terrified, begged them to come aside with her. They did so, and in a few words she told them the tale of her disastrous adventure, in full detail. She told them that she had no knowledge of the assailant who had robbed her of her honour. She told them what she had seen in the theatre where the tragedy of her misfortune was performed: the window, the garden, the grating, the desks, the bed, the damask hangings. Finally, she showed them the crucifix she had taken away. Before the image their tears were renewed, prayers were uttered, vengeance was demanded, and miraculous chastisements were requested. She herself said that she did not want to be acquainted with her ravisher, but if her parents thought it right to know him, they could find out by means of this image. They could have sacristans announce in the pulpits of all the parishes in the city that whoever had lost such an image could find it in the possession of a monk they would name: if the owner of the image were known, the house and the identity of her enemy would be known.

"You would have a good plan, daughter," replied her father, "if common malice were not opposed to your wise reasoning. It is clear that this image will be missed from the apartment some time today, and its owner will be certain that the person who was with him carried it off. When it comes to his attention that some monk has it, he is more

likely to make use of his knowledge to find out who gave it to the one who has it than to name the owner who lost it. For it may cause another person, to whom the owner may have imparted a description of it, to come to claim it; if this happens, we will be bewildered rather than informed; we too could use the same artifices as we suspect, and hand it to the monk by a third party. You must keep the image, daughter, and commend yourself to it; it was the witness of your misfortune, and it will permit there to be a judge to do you justice. Remember that an ounce of public dishonour is a more grievous burden than many pounds of secret infamy. With the aid of God, you can live honoured in public, so do not let it grieve you to be dishonoured in secret, in your own eyes. True dishonour lies in sin and true honour in virtue. God is offended by our speech, by our desire, and by our action: but since you have not offended Him in word or thought or deed, regard yourself as honest. I will consider you as such and never look on you except as your true father." With these prudent words, Leocadia's father comforted her, and her mother, embracing her again, tried to console her. Leocadia sighed, and wept again, and was forced to hide her head, as they say, and to live a retired life under her parents' protection, dressed in clothing as honest as it was poor.

Rodolfo returned to his house, noticed that the crucifix was gone, and guessed who might have taken it. He said nothing about it, and since he was rich he did not care much about it. His parents did not ask about it when he left for Italy three days afterwards, giving an inventory to his mother's maid of everything he was leaving in the apartment. Rodolfo had been determined for a long time to go to Italy, and his father, who had been there, kept urging him to go, telling him that it was not enough to be a gentleman only in one's own country, and that he must prove to be a gentleman in foreign countries as well. Rodolfo was persuaded by these and other arguments to comply with his father's wishes. His father gave him credit for large sums in Barcelona, Genoa, Rome, and Naples, and he departed immediately with two companions, eager because of what he had heard some soldiers say about the abundance of the hostelries of Italy and France, and of the freedom Spaniards enjoyed in their quarters. He was pleased by the sound of "*Eco li buoni polastri, picioni, presuto et salcicie,*" ("Here are fat capons, pigeons, hams, and sausages") and other things of this sort which soldiers call to mind when they return here from those regions and experience the scanty food and the inconveniences of the inns and taverns of Spain. In short, he departed with as little concern for what had happened to him with Leocadia as if it had never taken place.

Meanwhile, she was living in her parents' house in the greatest possible privacy, not allowing herself to be seen by anyone, for she was afraid that strangers would read her misfortune on her face. In a few months, however, she saw that she must do of necessity what she had been doing by choice: she saw that she must live a retired and secluded life because she realized that she was pregnant. This event brought back the tears, partially forgotten, to her eyes; her sighs and lamentations began again to rival the winds, and her good mother's arguments were unable to console her.

The months passed, and the time of her delivery arrived. With such secrecy that she did not dare trust even a midwife—her mother assuming that office—she brought to the light of the world one of the loveliest boys that could be imagined. With the same precautions and secrecy with which he had been born, he was taken to a village where he was raised for four years. At the end of that time, his grandfather brought him to his house, calling him a nephew, and he was reared there, if not luxuriously, at least very virtuously. The child, who was called Luis after his grandfather, had a lovely face, a mild disposition, and a keen mind. He gave signs in all the actions which were possible to him at that early age of being the son of a noble father; his grace, beauty and discretion so captivated his grandparents that they came to regard their daughter's misfortune as a blessing, because it had given them such a grandchild. When he walked in the streets, thousands of blessings showered down upon him; some blessed his handsome appearance, some blessed the mother who bore him, others the father who begot him, and others the man who reared him and brought him up so well. With this praise from those who knew him, and even those who did not, the child reached the age of seven, by which time he could already read Latin and Spanish, and could write clearly and elegantly. His grandparents' intention was to make him virtuous and learned, since they could not make him rich—as if knowledge and virtue were not riches over which neither thieves nor what is called "fortune" possess any jurisdiction.

It happened one day, however, that the child went with a message from his grandmother to one of her kinswomen, and he happened to pass by a street where there was a horse-race going on. He stopped to watch it, and, in order to find a better position, he tried to cross from one side of the street to the other at a time when he could not avoid being knocked down by a horse whose master was unable to stop it in the fury of its race. It ran over the child, and left him stretched out on the ground as if he were dead, with blood flowing profusely from his head. This had scarcely happened when an elderly gentleman who was watching the race jumped off his horse with surprising agility, rushed to where the child was; he snatched him from the arms of someone who had already laid hold of him, and took him in his own arms. Regardless of his grey hairs and his high rank, he set off for his house at a rapid pace, commanding his servants to leave him and go in search of a doctor to heal the child. Many other gentlemen followed, grieving for the misfortune of such a lovely boy. The news soon spread that the child who had been knocked down was Luisico, the nephew of—and they named his grandfather.

The report ran from mouth to mouth until it reached the ears of his grandparents and his disguised mother; when they were assured of the circumstances, they rushed out to seek their darling as if they were deranged and maddened. Since the gentleman who had carried him off was well known and a man of importance, many of the people they met could point out his house, and when they reached it, the child was already in the doctor's care. The gentlemen and his wife, the owners of the house, supposing them

to be the child's parents, begged them not to cry out or raise their voices in lamentation, since that would be of no use to the child. The doctor, a famous man, dressed the wounds with great caution and in masterly fashion, and said that the wound was not as serious as he had at first feared. In the middle of the treatment, Luis, who had been unconscious, came to himself and was delighted to see his uncle and aunt. They asked him, tearfully, how he felt, and he replied that he was well, except that his body and his head hurt him very much.

The doctor advised them not to talk to the boy, but to leave him and let him sleep. They did so, and his grandfather began thanking the owner of the house for the great kindness he had shown to their nephew. The gentleman replied that there was no need for thanks. He informed the grandfather that when he saw the child fallen and trampled on, it seemed to him that he had seen the face of a son of his, whom he loved dearly. This had inspired him to take the boy in his arms and carry him to his house, where he could stay for as long as necessary for his recovery, with all the comfort that was possible and necessary. His wife, who was a noble lady, said the same thing, and gave even warmer promises. The grandparents were surprised at such Christian behaviour, but the boy's mother was even more astonished. When her anxious mind had been somewhat soothed by the doctor's report, she looked carefully around where her son was, and realized by many signs that this was the room where her honour had its end and her misfortune its beginning. Although it was not decorated with the damask hangings which it had before, she recognized its arrangement, and she saw the window with the grating which looked on the garden; since it was closed because of the patient, she asked if the window opened onto a garden, and she was told that it did. What she knew most clearly was that it was the same bed, which she considered the tombstone of her grave, and also that even the desk, on which had stood the image she had taken away, was in the same position. Finally, the truth of all her suspicions was proved by the number of stairs which she had counted when she was led from the room blindfolded; I mean the stairs from there to the street, which she had prudently counted. When she left her son and returned to her house, she counted them again, and found the number exact.

Comparing these indications with each another, at every point she discovered her guess to be correct. She gave a detailed account of the matter to her mother, who, like a discreet woman, made inquiries whether the gentleman to whose house her grandson had been taken had ever had a son; she discovered that he was the young man we have called Rodolfo, and that he was in Italy. Considering the time which she was told that he had been absent from Spain, she found it was seven years, the very age of her grandson. She informed her husband of all this, and the two of them and their daughter agreed to wait and see what God did with the injured boy. In two weeks he was out of danger, and in a month he was up and about. During all this time he was visited by his mother and grandmother, and treated by the owners of the house as if he were their

own son. Sometimes, indeed, Doña Estafanía—for so the gentleman's wife was named—remarked to Leocadia, as they were talking together, that the child resembled her son who was in Italy so much that she never looked at him without thinking that her own son was before her.

Once, when she found herself alone with her, Leocadia took advantage of these remarks to tell her what she had, with her parent's agreement, decided to say to her, in words such as the following: "On the day that my parents heard that their nephew was so seriously injured, madam, they believed and thought that Heaven had been closed against them, and that all the world had fallen on their shoulders. They imagined that the light of their eyes and the support of their old age had already failed, with the loss of the nephew they love so dearly, for their attachment to him greatly surpasses that which other parents usually have for their own children. But, as is commonly said, "When God gives the wound He gives the medicine." The child found such medicine in this house, and I have found some memories which I will never be able to forget as long as I live. Madam, I am noble, because my parents are so, and all my forefathers have been so, for with a moderate share of fortune's goods they have sustained their honour happily wherever they have lived."

Doña Estafanía was surprised and perplexed when she heard Leocadia's words, and she could not believe, although she had seen it, that so young a girl could have so much discretion, since by her appearance she judged her to be twenty years old, more or less. Without speaking to her or uttering a word in reply, she listened to everything the girl wanted to say to her, which sufficed to relate the Rodolfo's wanton outrage—her dishonour, her abduction, the blindfolding of her eyes, her removal to his apartment, the signs by which she recognized it to be that which she had suspected. As proof, she brought from her bosom the image of the crucifix which she had taken away, and spoke to it in the following terms: "O Saviour, who witnessed the violence done to me, be judge of the reparations I deserve. I took You from above that desk, in order to remind You always of my wrong, not to demand vengeance for it from You (for I do not claim that), but to ask You to grant me some consolation, so that I may bear my disgrace patiently. This boy, madam, to whom you have shown your great charity, is really your grandson. It was by the permission of Heaven that he was trampled on, so that when he was carried to this house I would find here, as I hope I must find, if not a remedy appropriate to my misfortune, at least the means by which I may be able to endure it." Saying this, she embraced the crucifix, and fell fainting into the arms of Estafanía, who, like a noble woman in whom compassion and pity are as natural as cruelty in man, had scarcely seen Leocadia's swoon when she pressed her own face to the girl's, and shed so many tears over her that there was no need to sprinkle any other water over it so that Leocadia would regain consciousness.

While the two of them were in this situation, the gentleman married to Estafanía happened to enter the room, leading little Luis by the hand. Seeing Estafanía's tears and

Leocadia's swooning, he asked them urgently to tell him the cause of their distress. The child embraced his mother as his cousin, and his grandmother as his benefactress, and asked why they were weeping. "There are great things to announce to you, sir," replied Estafanía to her husband, "the substance of which will be summed up by telling you that you must think of this girl who has swooned as your daughter and this boy as your grandson. The girl told me the truth about it, and this child's face, in which we have both seen our son's features, has confirmed and confirms her."

"If you do not explain this more fully, madam," said the gentleman, "I will not be able to understand you." At this point, Leocadia came to herself, and, clasping the crucifix, she appeared to be transformed into a sea of tears. All this threw the gentleman into a state of great confusion, from which he emerged when his wife related to him the whole story that Leocadia had told to her; by divine permission he believed it, as if they had proved its truth to him by many truthful witnesses. He consoled and embraced Leocadia, kissed his grandson, and that very day the parents sent a letter to Naples advising their son to come home at once, because they had arranged a marriage for him with a woman who was lovely beyond measure and of a rank such as was suitable to him. They did not consent that Leocadia or her child should return to the house of her parents, who were satisfied with their daughter's good fortune and gave endless thanks to God for it.

The letter arrived in Naples, and Rodolfo, filled with the longing to enjoy such a lovely a woman as his father mentioned to him, and taking advantage of four galleys on the point of going to Spain, set out two days after he received the letter with two companions who had remained with him all the time. After a prosperous voyage of twelve days he reached Barcelona, and after seven more, taking posthorses, he found himself in Toledo, and entered his father's house, so gallant and high-spirited that the extremes of gallantry and high spirits were united in him. His parents were delighted with their son's good health and happy arrival.

Leocadia gazed at him excitedly from a hidden corner, in order not to disturb the plan and order which had been laid down for her by Doña Estafanía. Rodolfo's companions wished to go straight to their homes, but Estefanía would not permit it, for they were essential to her plan. It was near nightfall when Rodolfo arrived, and while the dinner was being prepared, Estefanía called her son's comrades aside, believing that they were without doubt two of the three who were, as Leocadia said, walking with Rodolfo the night she was abducted. She urgently encouraged them to tell her if they remembered her son abducting a woman on such a night, so many years ago. Knowing the truth about this incident was important to the honour and peace of mind of all his relations. She managed to ask this with so many pressing entreaties and in such a way as to assure them that no harm could come to them from the discovery of the abduction that they thought it right to confess the truth: one summer night, the very one that she indicated to them, they and another friend, in company with Rodolfo, abducted a

young girl. Rodolfo had made off with her while they detained the members of her family, who tried to defend her with shouts; the next day he had told them that he had taken her to his house. This was the only answer that they could give to her questions.

The young men's confession was enough to put an end to all the doubts which could occur to her in the matter, and so she decided to carry out her clever plan, which was this. Just before they sat down to supper, his mother went into another room, alone with Rodolfo. Placing a portrait in his hands, she said to him, "Rodolfo my son, I wish to make your supper pleasant by showing you your bride. This is a faithful likeness of her; but I want you to observe that what may be lacking in beauty, she more than makes up for in virtue. She is noble, intelligent, and moderately rich; since your father and I have chosen her, you may be assured that she is the one who suits you."

Rodolfo gazed attentively at the portrait, and said, "Painters are usually in the habit of being prodigal with beauty in the portraits they paint; if it is so in this case also, I undoubtedly believe that the original of this must be ugliness personified. Truly, my lady mother, it is just and good for a son to obey his parents in whatever they command; but still, it is also fitting and even better for parents to provide their son with a situation which will most please the state with which he will be most pleased. Since marriage is a knot that only death unties, its bonds should be equal, and manufactured of the same threads. Virtue, nobility, wit and property may well delight the understanding of a man who receives them along with his bride; but it seems to me impossible that such ugliness should cheer the eyes of a bridegroom. I am young, but I understand that the just and due pleasure which married couples enjoy is most compatible with the sacrament of marriage. If it is lacking, the marriage is lame, and renounces its second intention. To think that to keep an ugly face at all hours before one's eyes, in the parlour, at the table and in bed, can cause pleasure—again I say that I consider it nearly impossible. I beg you, mother, on your life, to give me a companion who will charm me and not disgust me. Let both of us, without turning to this side or that, bear equally, and in straightforward fashion, the yoke which Heaven may place on us. If this lady is noble, intelligent, and rich, as you say, she will not fail to find a bridegroom whose temperament differs from mine. There are some who seek nobility, others cleverness, others money, and others beauty: I belong in the last group. My ancestors and my fathers have given me nobility, thank Heaven, for an inheritance. As for cleverness, provided a woman is neither ignorant, stupid, or silly, it is enough that she not miss her aim because of excessive subtlety, or fail to advance because of dullness. My parents' wealth makes me unafraid of becoming poor. I seek loveliness; I desire beauty, with no other dowry than virtue and good manners; if my bride brings these, I will serve God with pleasure, and give my parents a good old age."

His mother was very satisfied with the Rodolfo's reasonings, for she had learned from them that she was progressing well with her plan. She replied that she would take care to marry him in accordance with his wishes, and that he should not feel any anxiety,

since it was easy to undo the arrangements that had been made for his marriage to the lady in the portrait. Rodolfo thanked her, and since it was time for supper, they went to table. After the father and mother, Rodolfo and his two companions had taken their seats, Doña Estafanía remarked casually: "What a sinner I am! How poorly I have been treating my guest! Go," she said to a servant, "and tell Doña Leocadia not to be too concerned about niceties, but to come and honour our table by her presence; all those who are here are my sons, and her servants." This was all part of her plan, and Leocadia had been informed and instructed in all that she had to do. She came without delay, and was an unexpected vision, the loveliest that beauty, natural or aided by art, could ever provide. Since it was winter, she was wearing a black velvet gown; her train was set with golden buttons and pearls, and she wore a belt and a collar of diamonds. Her own hair, which was long and not too blond, served as her ornament and head-dress; arranged with bows, curls and sparkling diamonds intertwined with her tresses dazzled the eyes which gazed on them. Leocadia was refined in attitude and manner; she brought her son in by the hand, and two maid-servants walked before her, lighting her way with two tapers in silver candlesticks.

Everyone rose to bow to her as if she were something heavenly making a miraculous appearance there. Out of surprise, it seems, no one who stood there gazing at her was able to utter a word. Casually and elegantly, Leocadia curtsied to all of them, and Estefanía took her by the hand and seated her next to herself, across from Rodolfo. The child sat next to his grandfather. Rodolfo now gazed at Leocadia's incomparable beauty from a nearer point of view; he said to himself, "If the one my mother has chosen to be my wife is half as beautiful, I would be the most fortunate man in the world. God help me! What do I see? Is it perhaps some human angel that I behold?" All this time Leocadia's beautiful image was entering through his eyes to take possession of his soul.

She, too, as the dinner was being brought in, seeing so near to her the man whom she already loved more than the light of those eyes which now and then looked at him stealthily, began to turn over in her mind all that had happened with Rodolfo. The hope that she might be his wife, inspired in her by his mother, began to grow weak. She feared that his mother's promises were destined to correspond to her own ill luck; she began to realize that she was on the point of being happy or unhappy forever. This thought was so intense and her imagination disturbed her completely, troubling her heart in such a way that she began to grow hot and turn pale. A swoon overtook her, forcing her to lean her head on Doña Estefanía's arm; when she saw her plight, she received her in her arms with alarm. Everyone was startled, and, rising from the table, rushed to her aid; but the one who showed the greatest emotion was Rodolfo. In his haste to reach her, he stumbled and fell twice. They loosened her clothing and sprinkled her face with water, but she did not recover; her heaving bosom and her pulse, which they could not detect, continued to suggest her death. All the house servants, male and female, more excitable than the others, began to cry out and declare that she was dead.

This sad news reached her parents, whom Doña Estefanía had kept hidden for a more joyful occasion. Along with the curate of the parish, who was sharing their hiding place, they broke Estefanía's commands and rushed into the hall. The curate stepped forward quickly, looking for indications that she had repented her sins so that he might absolve her. Expecting to find one person in a swoon, he found two, for Rodolfo had already placed his face on Leocadia's bosom. His mother had yielded her place to him, so that he could come near to the girl as if to something destined to be his, but when she saw too that he had lost consciousness, she came close to fainting herself. She would undoubtedly have done so if she had not seen that Rodolfo was reviving; and when he did, he felt ashamed that everyone had seen him so deeply moved.

His mother, however, guessed her son's feelings, and said, "Do not be upset, my son, at the force of the emotion you have shown. You will be ashamed at not having shown even more feeling when you learn what I no longer wish to keep hidden from you, although I had planned to leave it for a happier time. You should know, son of my soul, that this lady who has fainted, whom I hold in my arms, is your true bride. True, I say, because your father and I have chosen her, and the lady in the picture was the false one."

When Rodolfo heard this, he was transported by his amorous and fiery passion, and the name of husband removed from him all the restraints which the reputation and decorum of the place might have placed on him. He threw himself on Leocadia's face; joining his lips to hers, he seemed to be expecting her soul to issue forth so that he might welcome it into his own. The tears of all the company grew more plentiful through compassion; their cries in creased from sorrow; Leocadia's father and mother tore at beard and hair, and her son's wailing reached to Heaven. Then, Leocadia came to herself, and when she recovered, the joy and satisfaction which had abandoned the hearts of those present again returned. Leocadia found herself in Rodolfo's arms, and would have used modest force to escape them if he had not said to her, "No, madam, it must not be so; it is not right for you to struggle to separate yourself from the arms of the man who holds you in his soul." With these words, Leocadia recovered her senses entirely, and Doña Estefanía gave up trying to carry out her original plan. She asked the curate to marry her son to Leocadia right away. He did so, for these events occurred at the time when matrimony was still celebrated only by the wish of the contracting parties, without any of the just and sacred formalities and preliminaries which are now observed, and consequently there was no difficulty to hinder the wedding.

This ceremony over, I may leave to another pen and another genius more refined than mine to describe the universal joy of all those who were present on the occasion—the embraces which Leocadia's parents bestowed on Rodolfo, the thanks they gave to Heaven and to his parents, the promises of the couple, the astonishment of Rodolfo's comrades who so unexpectedly witnessed such a beautiful wedding on the very night of their arrival, an astonishment that grew greater when they learned from the account

given by Doña Estafanía, in the presence of all of them, that Leocadia was the girl her son had carried off when in their company.

Rodolfo was no less surprised by this revelation; to be more assured of its truth, he asked Leocadia to give him some proof that would make him entirely certain of what he did not doubt, of course, because he saw that his parents considered it an established fact. She replied, "When I returned to consciousness and came to myself from my swoon, I found myself, sir, in your arms, without my honour. But I now think it was for the best, since in recovering from what I have just experienced, I have again found myself in my former enemy's arms, but with honour. Yet, if that is not sufficient proof, let the image of a crucifix suffice. No one could rob you of but I; if it is the case that you missed it in the morning, and if it is the one my lady is holding..."

"You are the image of my soul, and you will be mine for all the years God will allow, my love!" He embraced her again, and the blessings and congratulations which were bestowed on them were renewed.

The supper came, and the musicians who had been engaged for the occasion arrived. Rodolfo saw himself reflected in the mirror of his son's face, and four grandparents wept for joy. Indeed, every corner of the whole house was visited by rejoicing, satisfaction, and general delight. Although the evening flew on nimble black wings, it seemed to Rodolfo that it made its journey, not with wings but with crutches—so great was his desire to see himself alone with his beloved wife. At last, the hour he longed for arrived, because there is no end that is not reached. Everyone went to rest, the house remained buried in silence.

But the truth of this narrative will not so remain, for the many sons and illustrious descendants this happy couple left in Toledo and who are still living will not consent to it. They enjoyed many prosperous years with each other, and with their children and grandchildren. All this was made possible by Heaven and the force of blood which the valorous, illustrious, and Christian grandfather of Luisico saw spilt on the ground.

"Cinziella"

from *The Pentameron*

GIAMBATTISTA BASILE

Neapolitan, 1634

There was once a King of Surcoluongo who had a daughter named Cinziella. She was as lovely as the moon: but every ounce of beauty in her was counterbalanced by a pound of pride, so that she didn't pay proper respect to anyone. It wasn't possible for her poor father, who wanted to marry her off, to find her a husband, no matter how virtuous or noble, to her satisfaction. But among all the princes who gathered to ask for her in marriage came the King of Bellopaese, who did everything he could to win Cinziella's affection. But the greater the weight his service, the more smaller was the measure of her reward; the more freely he gave his love, the stingier she was with her favours; the more liberal he was with his soul, the less generous she was with her heart. Every single day this poor man would say to her, "When, O cruel woman, among so many melons of hope which, when gathered, have turned out to be pumpkins, will I find one red one? When, O heartless infidel, will the tempests of your cruelty cease, so that I may direct the galley of my desires with a fair breeze into that beautiful harbour? When after so many imploring assaults and prayers will I raise the banner of my amorous desire on the walls of that beautiful fortress?"

But all these words were cast to the wind, for she had eyes that would pierce a stone, but she had no ears to hear the laments of a groaning, stricken man. She showed him as withering a countenance as if he had pillaged her vineyard. Finally, the poor lord, knowing Cinziella's cruelty and realizing that she took no more account of him than the devil does of some random knave, retired with his retinue, and bursting with indignation said, "I am through with the flames of love!" But he nevertheless swore a solemn oath to be revenged on this Saracen Moor, in such a way that she would repent having tormented him so.

He left the country, let his beard grow long and put some sort of dye on his face, and returned to Surcoluongo after a few months, disguised as a peasant; by means of bribery he obtained a post as the king's gardener. Working there as well as he could, one day he spread out under Cinziella's window an imperial robe all set with gold and diamonds. When her handmaids saw it, they informed their mistress at once, and she sent to ask the gardener if he was willing to sell it. He replied that he was neither a merchant nor a used clothing peddler, but that she could have it as a free gift if they allowed him to sleep one night in the Princess' hall.

The maids reported this to Cinziella, and said, "What would you lose, my lady, in giving the gardener this satisfaction and acquiring such a robe, which is fit for a queen?" And Cinziella, allowing herself to be caught on this hook—which was baited for bigger fish—was delighted; she took the robe and gave him what he wanted.

The next morning, a gown of the same sort appeared, spread out in the same place. Cinziella saw it and sent word to him that she would pay him whatever he wanted if he would sell it to her. The gardener replied that he would not sell it, but that she could have it as a free gift when they had allowed him to sleep in the Princess' anteroom. In order to get the clothing, Cinziella allowed herself to be moved by greed to give him what he wanted.

The third morning came, and as soon as the sun came to strike the flint on the tinder of the fields, he displayed in the same spot a beautiful bodice to match the other clothes. Cinziella saw it, and said, "If I do not get that bodice, I will never be happy again!" She summoned the gardener and said to him, "My good man, you absolutely must sell me that bodice which I have seen in the garden; take my heart for it!"

"I will not sell it, my lady: but, if you please, I will give you the bodice, and also a necklace of diamonds, if you allow me to sleep one night in your bedroom."

"What a churl you are!" exclaimed Cinziella. "It's not enough that you have slept in the hall and then in the anteroom: now it's the bedroom! Little by little, you'll want to sleep in my bed too!"

The gardener answered her, "My lady, then I will keep my bodice for myself and you keep your bedroom. If you wish to do business, you know the route. I am content to sleep on the floor, something which would not be denied even to a Turk: but if you could see the necklace I want to give you, perhaps you would make me a more equitable bargain."

The Princess, moved partly by self-interest and partly by the urging of her maids, who were helping the dog in his climb, allowed herself to go so far as to grant what he wanted. When evening came and the night like a pirate cast the tanning water over the hides of heaven, whence it became black, the gardener took the necklace and bodice and went into the Princess' room. When the gifts had been presented, she allowed him to enter the bedroom.

The Princess made him sit him in a corner and said to him, "Now stay right there and don't move, if you value my good will." Drawing a charcoal line on the floor, she added, "If you cross this line, you'll lose your ass!" She had the curtains drawn around her bed and lay down.

As soon as the gardener king was sure she was asleep, thinking it was time to toil in the garden of love, he lay down beside her and reaped the fruits of the love before the mistress of the place was awake. When she woke and saw what had happened to her, she was unwilling to remedy one evil by another or to ruin the garden itself just to punish the gardener. Making a vice out of necessity, she was contended with the

misdeed and felt pleasure in the fault. She who had held crowned heads in disdain did not shrink from submission to a churl—for such the King appeared and such Cinziella thought him to be.

Their practice continued and Cinziella became pregnant; seeing her belly grow larger day by day, she told the gardener that she knew she would be ruined if her father found out about it, and that they should devise a remedy for their danger. He replied that he could not think of any remedy for their fault other than to go away. He would take her to the house of one of his former employers and she would give her some assistance in the coming birth. Cinziella, reduced to such a wretched condition because of the sin of pride, which hurled her from rock to rock, let herself be persuaded by the King's words. Abandoning her own home, she committed herself to the judgment of Fortune.

But after a long journey, the King led her to his own home; informing his mother of the whole situation, he asked her to go along with the business, because he wished to be repaid for Cinziella's pride. And so, settling her in a wretched stable of the palace, he kept her in a miserable life, and bread was hard to come by. One day, when the King's maids were making bread, he told them to summon Cinziella to help, and at the same time he told her to see if she could sneak away some rolls to relieve their hunger.

While she was taking the bread from the oven, the wretched Cinziella in an instant snatched up a bun and put it in her pocket. At the same moment, the King came in, dressed in his proper clothes, and said to the girls, "Who gave you permission to allow this wretched female inside this house? Can't you see from her face that she's a thief? Check her pockets and you'll find the proof!" They searched her and proved the case, and cuffed her soundly around the head; the mockery and taunting lasted for the rest of the day.

The King disguised himself again and, going to see Cinziella, found her saddened and humiliated by the affront she had received. He told her not to feel such anguish at what had happened, given that necessity is mankind's tyrant, and, as the Tuscan poet says, "The hungry beggar is brought to do things which, in better state, he would have blamed in others." Since hunger chases even the wolf from the forest, she could be excused for doing something which would not be appropriate in another. He advised her to go upstairs where the lady of the house was cutting some cloth and offer to help her, and to see if she could steal a piece of it, since she was close to giving birth and they needed a thousand things.

Cinziella, who could not disobey her husband—for so she considered him—went upstairs and, joining the maids in cutting the linens, napkins, caps and shirts, hid some under her own clothes. But the King returned, and there was another scene as there was about the bread. The theft was discovered and there was another rash of abuse, as if they had discovered her with a whole pile of linen, and she crept back down to the stable.

Once again the King disguised himself and rushed down to her. Seeing her in despair, he told her not to be overcome by melancholy. Everything in the world was just a mater of opinion, he said, and so she should try a third time to see if she could get some little things for herself, for her baby would soon be born. The time was right for a good profit, since the lady of the house had engaged her son to a foreign lady and wanted to send her some beautiful robes of brocade and fine golden cloth. "And the bride is your height, and has exactly your measurements! It will be easy for some fine cuttings to come into your hands. You slip them into a bag, and we can sell them and live off the proceeds."

Cinziella, following her husband's orders, had just hidden a large piece of expensive brocade in her dress when the King came in, made a great fuss, and ordered her to be searched. The theft was discovered and he drove her out in great shame. He soon put on his gardener's disguise and ran down to comfort her: if he punished with one hand, the love he felt for her made him anoint her wounds with the other, so as not to drive her to despair.

The wretched Cinziella, tormented by what had happened to her and believing that it was all Heaven's punishment for the arrogance and pride she had displayed—so great that she had treated many princes and kings as her footstools—that she now was treated as a vile hussy. Her heart had been hardened to her father's advice, and now her face was reddened by the mockery of servants. The anguish and humiliation brought on her labour pains.

The Queen was informed at once, and had her brought upstairs; showing compassion for her condition, she put her in a bed decorated with gold and pearls in a room hung with golden tapestries. This caused Cinziella great astonishment, to see herself transported from a stable to a royal chamber, from the dungheap to such a sumptuous bed—and she could not account for what had happened to her. Broth and biscuits were given to her to strengthen her for the delivery. But by the will of heaven, without too much pain, she brought to light two beautiful male children, the prettiest creatures one could ever see.

She had scarcely been delivered when the King entered and said, "What has happened to your good sense? Why have you put such a fine saddle on a donkey? Is this a bed for such a peasant? Quickly, get out the clubs, get her up, and throw her out—and fumigate the place with rosemary to get rid of the stench!"

The Queen heard this and said, "No more, my son, enough! You have tormented the poor girl enough! You should be satisfied with having reduced her by such torments to such wretchedness. If you are not yet satisfied for the contempt she displayed to you at her father's court, these two beautiful boys she has presented to you are enough to pay the debt." She had the babies brought in, the most beautiful things in the world.

Seeing the two chubby little fellows, the King felt his heart softening. Embracing Cinziella, he revealed who he was and told her that everything he had done to her was

caused by his outrage at seeing a king like himself treated so poorly; but in future he would cherish and protect her. The Queen, for her part, embraced her as a daughter-in-law and even a daughter, and they rewarded her so well for these two boys that this moment of consolation seemed more than sweet enough to make up for all past sorrows. But Cinziella remembered ever after to keep her sails down, recognizing that "The daughter of pride is ruin."

Bibliography

The Life of St. Thais, Whore
https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Vita_S._Thaisis

The Life of Saint Agnes
https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Epistolae_(Ambrosius)

Marcabru, *Pastorela*
http://trobar.org/troubadours/marcabru/mcbr30.php

Arnaut de Carcassès, *The Tale of the Parrot*
https://trobadors.iec.cat/veure_d_fra.asp?id_obra=1917

Ramon Vidal de Besalú, *The Jealous Man Chastised*
Castia Gilos, in Appel, Carl, Provenzalische Chrestomathie mit Abriss der Formenlehre und Glossar. Leipzig: Reisland, 1912. Pp. 27–32
https://archive.org/details/AppelProvenzalischeChresto4ed/page/n72/mode/1up

"The Sin of Being Seen"
Ancrene Wisse, ed. J.R.R. Tolkien. *Early English Text Society* 249 (1962). Pp. 29–34.

Tyolet, Desiré, Doon
Les lais anonymes des XII^e^ et XIII^e^ siècles, ed. P. M. O'Hara Tobin. Genève: Droz, 1976.

"Nicholas and the Bourgeoise"
Treize Miracles de Notre-Dame, ed. Pierre Kunstman. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1981. Pp. 51–55.

Renaut, *Ignaurés*
The Old French Lays of Ignaure, Oiselet and Amours. Ed. and tr. Glyn S. Burgess. Cambridge: Brewer, 2010.

The Lady Castrated
https://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/3038882#, pp. 230ff.

"Daphne and Apollo"
Ovide Moralisé. Ed. C. de Boer. Amsterdam: J. Muller, 1915–38. Vol. 1, pp. 120–234.

Ramon Muntaner, "The Conception of Jaume el Conqueridor"
https://books.google.ca/books?id=J4EPfNK4t-oC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false. Pp. 7ff.

"The Deception of Women"
Dives and Pauper. Ed P.H. Barnum. *Early English Text Society* 275 (1976). Pp. 94ff.

Fleurie
Nouvelles françaises inédites du quinzième siècle. Ed. Ernest Langlois. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1908. Pp. 61–67.
https://archive.org/details/nouvellesfrana00languoft/page/n86/mode/1up?q=hongrie

William Dunbar, *The Two Married Women and the Widow*
https://allpoetry.com/The-Tretis-Of-The-Twa-Mariit-Women-And-The-Wedo

Marguerite of Navarre, "Florida and Amador"
Marguerite de Navarre. *L'Heptaméron*. Ed. M. François. Paris: Garnier, 1991. Pp. 55–85.

Miguel de Cervantes, *The Force of Blood*
https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/la-fuerza-de-la-sangre--0/html/ff314dee-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_15.html

Giambattista Basile, "Cinziella"
Giambattisa Basile. *Lo Cunto de li Cunti*, overo *Lo Trattenemiento de Peccerille.* Ed. Mario Petrini. Bari: Laterza, 1976. Pp 360–66.
https://archive.org/details/260BasileLoCuntoSi034/260BasileLoCuntoSi034/page/360/mode/1up